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PALESTINE AND THE BIBLE

A Water Carrier of Jerusalem

Illustrating the Manners and Customs of the People in Bible Lands

16TH EDITION
79TH THOUSAND

BY THE

Rev. SAMUEL SCHOR

WHO WAS BORN IN JERUSALEM

PALESTINE AND THE BIBLE

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Illustrating the Manners and Customs of the People in Bible Lands

By the

REV. SAMUEL SCHOR

Vicar of Christ Church, Blackpool

Who was born in Jerusalem

Sixteenth Edition *Seventy-fifth Thousand*

INTRODUCTION TO THE SIXTEENTH EDITION

This is the Sixteenth Edition of this little Book. Altogether 75,000 copies have now been printed. God is using it as a humble handmaid in leading many to a more intelligent study of His Word. A clergyman, in recommending his people to get copies, said: **"I have learnt more from this little book than from many a thick half-guinea commentary."**

This book was originally intended to be the Catalogue of the Palestine Exhibitions, started by the author, but it is read and re-read as a reference-book and text-book on the customs of the East.

It has been translated into Welsh, Swedish, and is now being brought out in raised type for the blind.

May God continue to bless this book and the exhibitions with which it is connected.

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SAMUEL SCHOR

University of Southern California

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PALESTINE AND THE BIBLE

BY THE

REV. SAMUEL SCHOR

CHAPTER I

EASTERN CUSTOMS AND MANNERS

GOD'S Word is an Eastern Book. It was written in the East, by Easterns and for Easterns. It is therefore only obvious that a study of that Land, its life and habits, furniture and dress, language and expressions—in short, everything connected with the Land and the People—will throw a flood of light on many passages of Scripture.

And God has made it possible for us to examine the subject thoroughly ; for He has, as by a miracle, allowed the Land and its inhabitants to remain unchanged throughout these many centuries. Most

countries change over and over again. They alter their habits, their dress, their furniture ; they advance in education and culture ; but Palestine has practically remained unchanged. Its life to-day is the life of Bible times. Visit that land, and if you have eyes to see and ears to hear, you will be able to throw yourself back in imagination to the times of Abraham, David, or our Lord.

Moreover, there is another important consideration. The natives of the land to-day are chiefly Arabs, descendants of Ishmael and Esau. They know nothing of the Scriptures. They do not choose their mode of life, their habits, their dress. They simply live this primitive life because their parents and grandparents for a hundred generations have lived it. They are therefore *unconsciously* living the life of Scripture, and are a daily witness to its truth. Undesigned witnesses are always the most valuable ones.

The greatest desire of Bible students is to understand the Book. Great scholars and divines have, by their knowledge of ancient languages, given us perfect translations and explanations. But commentaries lack life. It is one thing to read about the Shepherd King; it is another to follow a shepherd on the hills of Judea, see him wear the same sheepskin jacket, armed with the same kind of rod and staff, watch him sling his stones, call his sheep by name, take the new-born lamb to his bosom, carry the

wounded one gently on his shoulders, lead them to their resting-place, go before, while they follow him. Such a visit makes the Bible a living Book; you feel as though the shepherd of Bethlehem had lived this year, that you had just paid him a visit, and that he had fully explained to you his whole life. All this is so intensely simple, that it seems beneath the consideration of commentator and theologian. It is not "scientific," it is not critical. It is far more "scientific" to sit in one's study, and to prove that the story of the blessings and curses repeated on Gerizim and Ebal in the days of Joshua was an utter impossibility, owing to the distance of the two mountains from one another, and the fact that it is known how far the human voice can travel. It may be less "scientific" to visit those two mountains, and to see if any spot can be found from which the voice of man can travel across the intervening valley, and reach the hearers on the opposite hill; but it has been tried, the very words—the blessings and curses—have been repeated, and every word distinctly heard. Such an "unscientific and uncritical" method must demonstrate, however, to the study-critic, that there is "a screw loose in his philosophy."

The commentary of the future will embellish its pages by constant illustrations drawn from Eastern Customs and Manners, with the result that many difficulties of Scripture will be removed, and many apparently meaningless passages will become clear.

For years the author, who is a Native of the Holy Land, has been endeavouring to impress these truths upon Bible students by means of the Palestine Exhibitions which he started in the year 1891, and which, by their very popularity, and by the fact that others have copied them, prove how welcome the Eastern light upon the Book has been to countless thousands.

It is his earnest prayer, that this little book may be of some assistance in helping many to "search the Scriptures," and "to find eternal life."

CHAPTER II

AGRICULTURE

THE Jews were essentially an agricultural people. The ideal of national peace and prosperity was summed up in the well-known saying, "Every man shall sit under his own vine and fig-tree" (Zech. iii. 10). We are therefore not surprised to find frequent allusions to agricultural customs and implements in every part of the Bible. And remember this: the implements used, the nature of the country, the climate, the soil—in fact, everything connected with the subject of agriculture—is so different in Palestine, that *you cannot make a more fatal mistake than to compare Bible customs with English customs.* It is wise to lay it down as a general rule if you want to understand any Bible or Eastern custom: think of the very reverse of your own, and you will not be very far wrong.

Let me, therefore, impress upon every reader the importance of studying the agricultural allusions in Scripture in the light of Palestine customs of to-day. Such a study, and such a study only, *can make the Bible a real, living Book.*

Palestine is called *a Land flowing with milk and*

honey (Josh. v. 6); it was a very fertile country. There are two features which tend to make Palestine *a land of almost unbounded resources.*

(*a*)—*The Climate.* Although only a small country, not much larger than Wales, it has every variety of climate, from the colds of Norway and Sweden to the tropics of Central Africa. We have our coldest climate in the North, on the Lebanon mountains, and the temperature rises as you descend to the highlands of Ephraim, Manasseh and Judah; it rises still more as you descend into the plain of Sharon and along the whole length of the Mediterranean, and reaches a tropical heat in the hot valley of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. Practically everything can, therefore, grow in some part of Palestine.

(*b*)—*The Soil* is intensely fertile. No artificial manure is used. It is not needed. The source of the fertility of the country to a great extent consists of small soft limestones which are found scattered all over the country, sometimes almost completely hiding the soil from view. But when the rains descend and the floods come, the lime is dissolved, mixing with the soil and enriching the country just as the farmer is about to plough.

Eastern Ploughs.—The most primitive ploughs, made entirely of wood, are used to-day, and were no doubt used in Bible times. They are very light, and can easily be carried by a man. Notice the handle.

This is held *with one hand* (Luke ix. 62). The ploughshare being light and small scrapes the earth to a depth of one or two inches. The plough is fastened to the neck of the oxen with a yoke. There is nothing like it here. It is fastened on the neck of oxen. The oxen pass *under* it (see Jer. xxvii. 8, 11). The weight of the yoke naturally makes the poor animal stoop. Hence the force of the allusion that when God brought Israel out of Egypt and broke their yoke of bondage, He says, "I made you go *upright*" (Lev. xxvi. 13). The yoke is often used as a figure of speech to express bondage (see Gen. xxvii. 40; 1 Kings xii. 4; Isa. xlvii. 6, etc.). When a very grievous bondage was referred to, no stronger expression could be used than a *yoke of iron* (Deut. xxviii. 48; Jer. xxviii. 14). Yokes of iron are never used: at least, I have never seen or heard of them; they are obviously used as a figure of speech. Some yokes fit better than others, and could be used with greater comfort by the hard-working animals; thus the yoke which our Lord imposes on us "*is easy*" (Matt. xi. 30). Oxen have been used from the earliest times and are still in use. Horses have only recently been introduced by the Zionists who have settled in large numbers in the Holy Land. In his other hand the ploughman holds a long pole about six or eight feet long, at one end of which he fixes a sharp nail: this is *the goad*. With this he pricks and goads the animals in their work. The other end contains a flat piece of iron to scrape away the soil from the ploughshare. Like everything else, it is

used as a figure of speech, in Eccles. xii. 11, "The words of the wise are as goads"—a homely way of expressing the driving force of good words; and again by our Lord in Acts ix. 5 and xxvi. 14, where it is called "pricks" (see Rev. Version). Young animals are unaccustomed to the yoke (Jer. xxxi. 18). They fight and kick, but to no purpose, for they only hurt themselves by "kicking against the pricks."

Many farmers will often plough together, each having his own plough and yoke of oxen, the one following close behind the other. Farmers club together in this way, partly for protection from the roving Bedouin robbers, and partly on account of the size of some of their fields. Imagine a farmer making a single furrow nearly one mile in length! Thus Elisha was engaged with eleven others when called by Elijah (1 Kings xix. 19). As expressed in our Authorized Version, a wrong impression is conveyed to the mind. We imagine Elisha with a plough so bulky, or soil so heavy, that twenty-four oxen were required to drag the one plough! Again, Elisha boils the flesh "with the instruments of the oxen" (1 Kings xix. 21), showing that they were of wood.

Sometimes animals are "*unequally yoked together*"—a camel and a donkey, or a donkey with a cow. This was forbidden by the Law (Deut. xxii. 10). Watch two different animals under the same yoke, and one realizes both the humour and the pathos of

St. Paul's illustration of the incongruity of mixed marriages (2 Cor. vi. 14).

The Rainfall.—Ploughing commences after the "*early rains*" in the autumn have thoroughly saturated and softened the ground (see Ps. lxv. 10). Palestine has practically two seasons only, *the wet and the dry*. The dry season commences in April and lasts until October, and during this long period hardly a drop of rain falls. The first rains, or early rains, come about the end of September or beginning of October, and the wet season closes with the last or latter rains in March or April. When, therefore, the winter is past, "the rain is over and gone" (Cant. ii. 11). Not a drop of rain falls in summer. Hence "snow in summer or rain in harvest" is as exceptional a thing as "honour for a fool" (Prov. xxvi. 1). When Samuel prayed that it might *rain in wheat harvest*, *i.e.*, in June, it would at once be connected with a judgment from God, for it was most exceptional (1 Sam. xii. 17, 18). During the winter months there will be heavy showers of rain, accompanied often by thunder and lightning, hail and snow, and alternating with some days of bright warm sunshine. The average rainfall is about 25 inches, and falls within 60 days of the whole year. The rains are therefore sometimes torrential. During the winter of 1911 and 1912, 20 inches of rain was recorded in Jerusalem between December 20 and January 20.

The "early and the latter rains" do not imply two distinct seasons of rain, with a dry season between,

but the commencement and close of the rainy season. Both are greatly needed. Without the first rains, no ploughing or sowing can be done; without the latter rains there will be no harvest. A sad distressing picture of the absence of the *latter rain* is given in Joel i. 7-20.* It implies the arrival of the early rains, the consequent sowing of the seed, its early growth with a promise of a good harvest, but the hopes of the farmer shattered by the absence of the latter rains. (See 2 Kings xix. 26.)

As soon as the first rains have saturated and softened the ground, the ploughman begins his work. Until the early rains fall he cannot plough. The "heaven over him is as brass, and the soil under him is like iron" (Deut. xxviii. 23). The earth is as hard as a rock, hence the strong and natural expression in Psalm lxv. 10, "Thou *dissolvest* it with showers," not, "Thou makest it soft."

Sometimes the "early rains" are very late, or insufficient in quantity † *to dissolve* the hard clods: in that case the ploughman has to wait (James v. 7) and

* The spring of 1900 sadly fulfilled all the conditions of these verses. The early rains were plentiful, and gave promise of an excellent harvest; but the rains had stopped all through February, March and April, changing the land from joy to mourning; the fields of corn were wasted (v. 10), the young leaves of the vines had withered (v. 12), numbers of cattle perished for want of grass (v. 18), while the people started pilgrimages to various sacred shrines, fasting and praying for rain (v. 14).

† In Joel ii. 23 God is promising to send the rain *in proper quantities*. The "former rain *moderately*" means in right quantities.

hope *and pray* (1 Kings viii. 35). "Waiting for rain" implies a season of great anxiety (Job xxix. 23; Jer. xiv. 4). But when once the rains have come in sufficient quantities, he must start ploughing at once. He may have to plough in the very face of hail and snow, storm and tempest, but plough *he must;* for if he does not plough and sow with the early rains, he will not reap after the latter rains (see Prov. xx. 4, "The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold"; and Eccles. xi. 4, "He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap"). No doubt our Lord is thinking of a man ploughing in a storm of rain and hail when He says, "He that putteth his hand to the plough and looketh behind" (Luke ix. 62). Before him the poor man faces the storm, behind him he perhaps sees his comfortable home.

During the harvest the farmer produces his *threshing instrument.* It is a "sharp instrument with teeth" (Isa. xli. 15). The corn is cut with a sickle, bound in sheaves, and conveyed on camels' backs to the threshing floor—a field with a flat, hard surface. Here the grain is trodden out by animals. Threshing instruments, where used, are made of two or three thick boards of wood (1 Chron. xxi. 23), fastened together side by side, and look very much like a sledge. The underneath part has sharp flint stones or pieces of iron, like teeth, fixed to it. These sharp points not only extract the grain from the ear, but chop up the straw.

With this knowledge we can understand Gideon's threat, "I will *thresh* your flesh with thorns" (Judges viii. 7). God's punishments are often compared to threshing (Isa. xxv. 10; Hab. iii. 12), while the same picture is used in describing His judgment of the nations at the great Armageddon, "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision" (literally, threshing). (See Joel iii. 14.) Very often no instrument is used. The oxen are made to tread the corn until it has been threshed.

During this process the *muzzle* comes into operation. Animals are generally muzzled while the corn is being threshed. This was forbidden in Deut. xxv. 4.

Another important implement is the *winnowing fan*, also made of wood and fork-shaped. Wheat and chaff are separated with it (Matt. iii. 12). The grain is heaped up, and men dip the fork, and toss it in the air. The wind *carries the light chaff away*, leaving the heavier grain on the floor (Isa. xxx. 24). Hence the frequent connection found in the Bible between the wind or whirlwind and the chaff (Ps. i. 4; xxxv. 5; Isa. xvii. 13; xli. 16; Jer. li. 2; Hos. xiii. 3). It is easy to realize John the Baptist's striking reference (Matt. iii. 12), "*He will throughly purge his threshing floor*," *i.e.*, Christ will separate the chaff from the wheat.

Ears of corn, neatly plaited, are brought to the towns by farmers, and presented to their patrons.

Thus were they probably plaited when, as the first-fruit, they were waved as a wave-offering and presented to God (Ex. xxix. 24; Lev. viii. 27).

During harvest time many of the farmers leave their villages and live in their vineyards or olive yards, in booths made of reeds, or woodwork and brushwood. These represent the "lodge" mentioned in Isa. i. 8. The "cottage" is the "sukkah," translated "booth" in Lev. xxiii, 42, where the Israelites are commanded to make booths on the Feast of Tabernacles. They both represent the flimsiest of temporary habitations. The slave, who is told off to watch a field in which leeks or onions, cucumbers or melons, are growing, takes four long poles, which he cuts from some trees close by, fixes them in the ground in an upright position so as to form a square of about eight feet in height. Fastened to these he fixes a platform of wood about four feet from the ground, which he covers with an old straw mat, or a piece of coarse sacking, over which he throws the branches of trees. This shelters him from the burning rays of an eastern sun, and is the "lodge." As soon as the harvest is over the people return home, leaving the booth or lodge to its fate. The autumn and winter winds blow away part of the branches or matting, and there they remain true pictures of desolation and ruin; a striking illustration of a nation without God.

CHAPTER III

HOUSES AND CITIES

EASTERN houses are as unlike western houses as they can possibly be; hence the importance of studying the subject very carefully, since every part of an eastern house is mentioned in Scripture.

It will be noticed that the exterior consists of four bare ugly walls. There may be one or two windows, in which case they will be covered with lattice work. We enter by a very uninviting low street door. Such unpretentious entrances are the universal custom in the east, *and have been so from times immemorial.* Judged, therefore, from the exterior, eastern houses are uninteresting, ugly, and dirty. But it is *only the exterior* that presents so uninviting an appearance; the interior may be beautiful, comfortable, and clean. A house must not present any tempting features to the man in the street. Rulers have large powers and are often unprincipled men. A ruler has but to covet a house or field or vineyard, and he can soon gain possession of it; or he can always find that his wife, or some unscrupulous time-serving courtier, will be ready to help him in robbing and plundering the rightful owner. (Remember Ahab and the field of Naboth, 1 Kings xxi.)

It is, therefore, customary for the rich to *hide their wealth*. King Solomon reminded his contemporaries of this fact when he said "*He that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction*" (Prov. xvii. 19). And the noblemen and gentry of the very city where these words were written realized the truth of King Solomon's saying when Nebuchadnezzar burnt "*every great man's house*" (2 Kings xxv. 9). Micah denounces those who rob and plunder houses (Micah ii. 2. See also Amos iii. 15).

We next notice *the door*. It is generally "*two-leaved*" (Isa. xlv. 1). This explains the two leaves in 1 Kings vi. 32-34 and Ezek. xli. 24. We next find ourselves—supposing we are visiting the house of a wealthy man—in the porter's lodge. It is a small room through which we pass before entering the house. The porter is called "*Bawab*," literally, *a door-keeper*. All gates of cities, temples, palaces, etc., had *Bawabs* (see 1 Chron. ix. 21* and xv. 23, 24). When the doors are shut and anyone knocks, seeking admission, the porter does not open at once. He first calls out, "Who is there?" The one who knocks replies with the expression, "It is I." If the porter does not recognize the voice, he continues questioning until he is satisfied that "all is well." Hence Rhoda first questioned Peter, and recognizing his voice, in her joy left him standing without (Acts xii. 13, 14). The door would not be opened to any suspicious or unwelcome stranger. The unfriendly neighbour, without opening

* Nearly every mention of "porter," both in the Old and New Testament, refers to the *Bawab*.

the door, says, "Trouble me not" (Luke xi. 7). Our Saviour's gracious promise should be remembered here, "*To him that knocketh it shall be opened*" (Matt. vii. 8), *i.e.*, the door will be instantly opened, without waiting to ask any questions. It implies the heartiest welcome. Our Saviour's words in Rev. iii. 20, "Behold I stand at the door and knock," come irresistibly to mind, and in the light of the east are surrounded with tender pathos: our hearts should reflect that other eastern picture found in Cant. v. 2.

Now we enter *the court*. It is no covered hall, but open to the sky. All houses have courts. Great palaces have several (Esther v. 1). The Temple, God's house, had three. Sometimes one court leads into another. See Ezekiel's description of such a court in ch. xlvi. 21. They are generally paved with stone, sometimes with beautiful marble slabs, or inlaid with mosaics. Here they keep pots of flowers, or trees with delightful shade or still more delightful fruit, such as oranges, pomegranates, figs, dates. The vine, too, is made to grow over some trellis-work, forming a beautiful bower. It is probably to the fruit trees growing in these courts that the prophets refer when they say, "Every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree." Remembering the refreshing appearance of a court thus covered with trees, Isaiah's language receives fresh force when, in foretelling the doom of the city, he says that the courts shall be covered "*with reeds and rushes*" (Isa. xxxv. 7).

In the court of an ordinary house we generally find

the well. It is a cistern in which the rain is collected. During the dry season of the year they are often empty, and form a good hiding-place (2 Sam. xvii. 18). The word "well" should often be "cistern," *e.g.*, Gen. xxi. 19; Num. xx. 17; 2 Sam. xvii. 18; 2 Sam. xxiii. 15. But substitute the word spring in Gen. xxiv. 13, and in xlix. 22.

Now we enter *the rooms.* They are all built round the courtyard, with doors and windows facing it. The rooms are of various sizes, and built entirely of stone —walls, floor and ceiling. As the weight of the ceiling must necessarily be very great, the roofs are vaulted; hence the small domes which are so general a feature of all oriental roofs.

We now make our way up a flight of steps. They take us to *the housetop*, which is almost flat. A wall about two or three feet high runs right round it, forming a very necessary protection. This parapet is called *battlement* in the Bible (Deut. xxii. 8). The wisdom of this law will be apparent to all who remember how frequently they are used. Samuel spends a night with Saul on the housetop (1 Sam. ix. 25). Imagine a dark night on a housetop without the "battlement"! Here St. Peter prays, Acts x. 9. Idolaters would naturally choose the housetop when they wished to "worship the host of heaven" (Zeph. i. 5). In some towns the housetop is paved with flat stones, while in many villages in the north the roof is composed of mud, which has to be frequently levelled and hardened with a stone roller

one of which may be seen on most housetops, where it is kept ready for use. When the first rains come in the autumn, the mud softens, the rain soon finds its way through the cracks, resulting in a constant and very unpleasant drip, drip, drip, perhaps just on the spot where the people are trying to sleep. The wise king's comparison of the tongue of a talkative gossiping woman to this unpleasant dropping of the rain is quite appropriate (Prov. xxvii. 15). In course of time the cement wears away, the stones become loose, a bird drops a stray seed into the crevice, and grass and even wild flowers may be seen growing on the housetop. But "*it withereth afore it groweth up*" (Ps. cxxix. 6), having no depth of earth (2 Kings xix. 26, and Isa. xxxvii. 27).

It is quite possible for people to go from one house to another by stepping across the adjoining roof. But that would be a great breach of etiquette. Only under very exceptional circumstances would it be permitted, *e.g.*, in a case of hurried flight. When our Lord says, "Let him who is on the housetop not come down," etc. (Matt. xxiv. 17), He no doubt refers to a hurried flight from one housetop to another until some safe place can be reached by which to descend to the road and escape. It would thus be easy to pass news from house to house by proclaiming it from the housetop (Matt. x. 27, and Luke xii. 3). Most houses contain one storey only, but some possess one or two rooms on the housetop. These are called upper rooms. They are generally the best rooms—the largest and coolest, and are

used as *guest chambers* (Mark xiv. 14 ; Luke xxii. 11). Hence the guest-chamber in which our Lord celebrated His last Passover was also called an *upper room* (Mark xiv. 15 ; Luke xxii. 12).

Can a roof be uncovered? If eastern roofs are of stone and cemented, how could the man sick of the palsy be let down through the roof? Would not the removal of stones and cement cause much of the *débris* to fall on those sitting in the room and half bury them? (Mark ii. 4.) We have to remember that our Lord was "preaching the word" (verse 2). He chose, no doubt, a place where most people could hear. Now a room would obviously be the worst place, as only those actually within could hear.

But on many an eastern housetop, containing perhaps two upper rooms, the space between the two is covered over with boards, branches of trees, straw matting or tiles, and thus affords grateful shelter from the heat of the sun. Now from that spot our Lord could be heard by most of the people crowding in the house, including the courtyard and steps. The four men, carrying their sick friend, could only reach our Lord by obtaining an entrance next door, ascending the roof, then stepping across to the house in which the crowds had assembled, and proceed to remove the boards, brushwood and tiles.

Having examined the house, we will now visit *the city wall.* There is always a great distinction between

cities and villages in the east, consisting not so much in point of size, as in the fact that *all cities* of any importance have walls. This is emphasized in Deut. i. 28 ; Num. xiii. 28. The law also distinguished between the tenure of land in *walled* cities and in open villages (Lev. xxv. 29, 30). The walls are high, strong and massive. They are so thick that people can comfortably walk on the top. From the top of the wall the besieged would of course seek to repel the invaders (2 Kings xviii. 26 ; 2 Sam. xi. 21 ; Joel ii. 7-9). Here people also may be seen in times of peace (2 Kings vi. 26). Many of the stones are of great size. One stone on the east wall of the city of Jerusalem measures thirty-seven feet in length, and just below the surface some have been found forty feet in length. Houses are sometimes built close to the wall, and form part of it, containing even a window facing the exterior of the city. Such was Rahab's house in Jericho (Josh. ii. 15), and David's (1 Sam. xix. 12), and St. Paul's in Damascus (2 Cor. xi. 33). Jerusalem has always been a walled city, the walls pierced by four large gates which were always closed at sunset and not opened until sunrise. The author remembers as a boy the daily closing of the city gates. During the last 25 or 30 years, owing to the increase of the population of Jerusalem, and the consequent extension of the city beyond the walls, the gates have ceased to be closed (Isa. lx. 11).

Let us next examine *a city gate with the needle's eye.* Cities are pierced with several large gates of iron, which are always *two-leaved* (Isa. xlv. 1). When we

read of Samson taking the *doors of the gate* (Judg. xvi. 3), it means he unhinged *both leaves*. Gates are closed at sunset, and not opened until sunrise. This is still the case in all eastern cities (Neh. vii. 3, and xiii. 19). And when once the gates are shut, they will not be opened except to admit a great official who may be out on an errand of importance. The chief captain sends St. Paul from Cæsarea "*at the third hour of the night*" (Acts xxiii. 23), *i.e.*, about 9 p.m. A very wise precaution. No one could possibly pursue them until the gates were opened at about six the following morning. This would give the Apostle a nine hours' start, and make it impossible for any Jews to overtake them on the way.

When anyone has to be admitted or allowed to leave the city by night, *a smaller door fixed into the larger one* is opened. This is called the "needle's eye" (Matt. xix. 24; Mark x. 25; Luke xviii. 25). Now, try and picture the scene to which our Lord refers. Camels laden with large sacks of wheat, barley, charcoal or wood, are brought into town daily. They are our beasts of burden, for there are no carts in Palestine. The burdens are evenly balanced on either side of the camel's back, and stand out sometimes three or four feet, right and left. A camel, therefore, needs a wide gate to admit it and its burden. Every traveller in the east knows from experience what it means to meet a camel coming up a street only just wide enough for it to pass through. He cannot even stand against the wall; his only plan is to stoop low, and allow the camel

to pass by ; or walk out of that narrow street. Hence the meaning of our Lord was obvious to his hearers. A camel *with its burden* cannot enter the "needle's eye" ; its only chance of entering would be to remove the burden first. The point our Lord wished to inculcate was not that a rich man cannot enter heaven, but a man *who trusts* in his riches (Mark x. 24).

In the New Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible an article by Dr. Bliss flatly contradicts this view of the "Needle's Eye," his reason being the fact that he had seen one of these little doors in a house in Beyrout which was only 4 ft. high, through which it would be impossible for even the smallest camel to force its way.

This certainly sounds convincing ; but Dr. Bliss must have often passed through the Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem *which contains a smaller door from 7 to 8 ft. in height !* Why does he not record this fact ?

So much for "Advanced Criticism" !

The author remembers the closing of the gate and a camel actually passing the "needle's eye." The reader will forgive him for recording the circumstances ; they are interesting, as giving one an insight into the Jerusalem of 50 years ago.

In those days all the city gates were closed at sunset and not opened until sunrise. On Friday, being the

Moslem's Sunday, all gates were closed at noon for one hour to allow the soldiers to march to the Mosque for prayer. The author's parents lived then in a house belonging to a Greek priest, about 100 yards outside the Jaffa Gate. The school he attended was inside the city. His father therefore arranged for his boy to leave school half an hour earlier on Friday mornings, so as to reach home for a midday meal before the closing of the Jaffa Gate. On one occasion he reached the gate too late—it had just been closed. This meant waiting about an hour. This he did not mind, for numbers of people congregated, and an Arab crowd is always an amusing one. One piece of unusual diversion occurred when some one outside knocked and demanded admission. The sentinel, after several questions, opened the "needle's eye" to admit him. He proved to be an officer, and he entered leading his horse. While the soldier stood at attention and saluted, a facetious *fellah* suddenly slipped in from without. He had a rope in his hand, and before long there appeared the head and neck of a camel he was leading; with his head, long neck and two of his legs in, the camel refused to go on, and there ensued a great struggle, causing much mirth. Many men outside, enjoying the fun, tried to force the camel in by pushing and beating; while the soldier, now free to attend to the gate, tried with the butt end of his gun to force the camel and man back again. But the crowds were on the side of the man, with the result that after a great deal of struggling and groaning on the part of the camel, his hind legs and body at last passed

through the small gate amid the cheers and laughter of the crowds. The camel was carrying no burden.

Gates in the east open into large squares used as *market places*. Here people congregate, not only to transact business, but also to discuss the news of the day. At the gate sat the judge to administer justice (Deut. xxi. 19; xxii. 24; xxv. 7; Ruth iv. 1-10). The city gate is, indeed, the centre of all public life in the town. Here labourers sit, waiting to be hired (Matt. xx. 3). Women bring their baskets of fruit and vegetables for sale. Proclamations are made here. The wealthy townspeople sit on low stools sipping their coffee and smoking long pipes, which they order from a small improvised coffee-shop, while they discuss the news of the day; the city gate takes the place of a gentleman's club in England. To be spoken of highly in the city gate (Prov. xxxi. 23), means that a man is respected by high and low, rich and poor, by the gentry who sit there gossiping, and by the poor peasant women and labourers.

Here may be seen the Sakkah, or *water seller*, with his *skin bottle* slung behind his back, shouting out, "Ho, ye thirsty ones, come, buy and drink" (Isa. lv. 1). Here also sits the baker's boy with his basket of barley loaves—he is sure to be found wherever people congregate (John vi. 9).

Close to the small improvised coffee-shop sits a *minstrel*, playing and singing. Very often, when the song happens to be lively, one of the listeners will rise,

and treat the public to a dance. Eastern dancing, it should be remembered, differs from the dancing of western countries. In the east *men and women never dance together.* Then again, dancing consists merely in certain peculiar movements of the body and limbs, sometimes very graceful, sometimes otherwise. When the minstrel has succeeded in making some one rise to his feet and go through the usual dancing performance, he is pleased and flattered. It is a sign that his music is appreciated. Sometimes he will change his note to a sad, mournful strain. The tune is plaintive, and the words sad. The listeners are sometimes moved to tears, and the minstrel is again pleased, for he knows his music has affected his audience. Now turn to Matt. xi. 16-17. Our Lord compares Himself and John the Baptist to two minstrels, the one singing a sad song—"O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"; the other a bright joyous song—"Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest," but implying that the tale of neither minstrel had touched any hearts. It should be remembered that it is not the music of the minstrel which attracts, but the fairy tale he weaves into his song. Easterns will listen for hours to any one who can tell a good tale. Our Lord, in teaching His hearers *through parables*, was adapting Himself to eastern listeners.

The author was amazed to find the minstrel superseded in many coffee shops—even in Jericho—by the gramophone!

Outside the city, and all along the hillsides, may be seen numberless caverns. Many of them are used as burial-places. They are to be found in every part of Palestine. They are either natural or artificial caves, with niches cut into the sides just large enough to contain one body. People prepared tombs for themselves and families. The Cave of Machpelah was the burial-place of the Patriarch (Gen. xxiii.). Isaac no doubt added two more niches for himself and Rebecca ; Jacob again, for himself and Leah (Gen. xlix. 31). Asa prepared his own grave (2 Chron. xvi. 14), and Joseph of Arimathea prepared one in his own garden, in which the body of our Lord was laid (Matt. xxvii. 60). The tomb of Lazarus in Bethany was rock-hewn (John xi. 38, 39). You enter the cave through a very low opening. People therefore have to *stoop* to look in (John xx. 5). A round stone, similar to a millstone, only much larger, in an upright position, is rolled against the opening. To open the tomb this great stone has to be *rolled back*. The ground was always on an incline, lower at the door than at the sides ; hence it was easier to close than to open. This explains the question of the women, "Who shall roll us away the stone?" (Mark xvi. 3).

In Palestine the body was always wrapped in linen, and then placed in the tomb. Spices were used for sanitary purposes only ; the art of embalming being unknown. The Israelites differed entirely from the Egyptians in this ; they never attempted to preserve the body from decay. There are, however, two bodies

buried somewhere in Palestine that were embalmed: the bodies of Jacob and Joseph. But they died and were embalmed in Egypt.

CHAPTER IV

EASTERN FURNITURE

THE first thing to strike a European when visiting an eastern house is an almost total absence of furniture. Eastern rooms look very bare indeed. They contain low couches, called diwans, placed round three sides of the room, some rugs, a very small, low table, and this is practically all. There are, of course, houses in large towns where western ideas are beginning to prevail, and where many European articles of furniture are to be found, but a truly eastern house is sure to possess very little beyond those named above.

In 2 Kings iv. 10, we have a list of the articles of furniture in a guest-chamber, which consisted of a "bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick!"

The bed or couch. How different from an English bed!—and no bedstead! Instead of the latter, there is a raised stone platform built against the wall. These are found in most houses, and take the place of the bedstead. In the houses of the wealthy they are of marble and other beautiful stones. In Esther i. 6, we read that the couches were upon "a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black, marble." Now the Hebrew word

"mittah" is sometimes translated bed and sometimes couch, and once a bier (2 Sam. iii. 31). Another word, mishkav, from a root meaning to recline, is sometimes translated bed and bedchamber. In many a passage the word "bed" should be rendered by the word "couch." Esther was not in bed when she entertained Ahasuerus and Haman at the banquet, as one would imagine from the use of the words, "*And he was fallen upon the bed*" (Esther vii. 8); but was reclining on her couch. To the poor man, the couch by day becomes the bed by night. But in wealthier houses, where they had "bedchambers," such as in Pharaoh's palace (Ex. viii. 3), or Ishbosheth's mansion (2 Sam. iv. 7), this would not be the case. Sometimes, however, the word "bedchamber" means a recess in the wall, or a small closet, in which the mattresses and bedding are put away during the day-time. In such a place, no doubt, Joash was hid (2 Kings xi. 2). Hence it is only by a study of the context that one can discover when we are reading of a bed or a couch.

When David sings, "Let the saints sing aloud upon their beds" (Ps. cxlix. 5), he is referring to the couch or diwan on which people sit and sing. The mattresses are often covered with fine tapestry or linen—also an old custom (see Prov. vii. 16).

The bedding consists of a mattress. The *pillow or bolster* is a matter of indifference to the people. Michal makes one of an inflated goat's skin, and that was considered fit for the son-in-law of a king! (1 Sam.

xix. 13). Jacob had a stone (Gen. xxviii. 18), and probably others were accustomed to use the same head-rest. It was, therefore, the height of luxury to use soft pillows. Ezekiel, warning the Jews against luxury, referred to them (Ezek. xiii. 18, 20).

In Old Testament times low stools were frequently used, and the people were in the habit of sitting. This custom had been adopted by the Israelites in Egypt. After the return from Babylon, the Persian custom was adopted of using no stools at all, but reclining on couches or diwans. This *reclining, instead of sitting*, is referred to in Esther, and frequently in the New Testament. At the feeding of the five thousand, our Lord says, "Make the men *recline* (John vi. 10; and see also Luke ix. 14; xiv. 8, and xxii. 27; and Matt. viii. 11). Again, at the celebration of the last Passover, our Lord and His disciples *reclined* (Mark xiv. 18. See Revised Version to above passages). The natives of Palestine have now gone back to the older custom of *sitting* at a meal, but they sit on diwans instead of chairs. Hence we find the Old Testament custom in the posture of the people, and the New Testament custom in the use of the seat or diwan.

The poor man's bed consists of a rough cotton or woollen quilt, called *Ilhaf*. When our Lord said to the impotent man, "Take up thy bed and walk" (John v. 8), this was no doubt the bed he had to take. We need not suppose that he was ordered to carry a "four-poster."

The *table* is a low stand, about 18 inches high, on which a large tray of basket work or copper is placed. The basket tray ("sal" in Hebrew) should be distinguished from the larger baskets (called *dudim* in Hebrew). The "basket of bakemeats" brought to Pharaoh (Gen. xl. 17) was the tray or "sal." On the other hand, the baskets in which the heads of Ahab's sons were placed were dudim (2 Kings x. 7).

Fruit baskets. Fruit is still brought into the market town in dudim (Jer. xxiv. 1). Gideon used the "sal" (Judges vi. 19).

The *fire-hearth* is made of rough clay, and is used for cooking and warming purposes. Charcoal is burnt. The woman will light her fire in the open air, and when the fumes are exhausted, carry it into her room, round which the people sit in the evenings *warming their hands*. Thus Peter sat. Wealthy people use copper ones (John xviii. 18, and Jer. xxxvi. 22, 23). Remember, they had no stoves and no chimneys.

Lamps are made of clay, and shaped like a small bowl, which holds the olive oil. A piece of cotton-wool or flax forms the wick. When the oil in the lamp is nearly exhausted, a very unpleasant smoke is the result. But the moment oil is added, it ceases to smoke, and burns up brightly (Isa. xliii. 17). This is what "the Servant of the Lord," the Saviour, does to the soul. The same small lamps were used in Bible times.

They hold very little oil, and need replenishing about once every hour; hence *the foolishness of those virgins* who forgot to take a proper supply (Matt. xxv. 2, 8). A vessel containing this supply is to be found in every house. It is the *cruse of oil* mentioned in the case of the poor widow, in 1 Kings xvii. 12, and in Matt. xxv. 4.

The small lamps are placed on lampstands, called *candlesticks* (Matt. v. 15). They are made of wood, though sometimes of gold or some other metal. They have one branch, but no doubt in houses of the wealthy they would have more. Remember the seven-branched candlestick (Ex. xxxvii. 17-21, and Rev. i. 20). The light given is very poor, but quite enough to serve its purpose; as Easterns never work after dark, the lamps being used more for comfort than for anything else. Hence sometimes used as a figure of comfort (Ps. xviii. 28; Micah vii. 8). A lamp going out is often used to represent the extinction of a family or race (Prov. xiii. 9). "Lamp of the wicked shall be put out," means he shall die childless (see also Prov. xx. 20; 1 Kings xv. 4; 2 Sam. xxi. 17—Revised Version). This probably throws some fresh light on Gen. xv. 17, God's covenant with Abraham and his remarkable vision. "A flaming torch that passed between these pieces." Probably to indicate that not only would his lamp not go out, but that it would be a bright flaming torch.

The streets of eastern cities are not lighted after dark. It is only within recent years that Jerusalem

has been favoured with street-lamps. As the streets are bad, and in complete possession of wild street-dogs, a man cannot go anywhere after dark without the *lantern.* When carried it throws most of the light *on the ground.* This is where it is of course most needed, hence, God's word compared with a lamp for *one's feet* and light to *the path* (Ps. cxix. 105).*

A very pretty ewer and basin are used before and after a meal. As Easterns use no forks or knives, this is very necessary. It is also a very ancient custom. A slave pours water on the hands, holding the basin under them to receive all the dirty water. Elisha is thus described as having "poured water on the hands of Elijah." As this is the duty of a menial it naturally implies that Elisha became the servant of the latter (2 Kings iii. 11). The Jews made a rigorous rule in regard to the washing of hands *before* a meal, which is still the custom (Mark vii. 3 ; Matt. xv. 2).

When coming from a distance, *the feet too are washed, i.e.*, water from the ewer is poured over the foot, under which the basin is held. This, too, is a very ancient custom. The three angels had their feet washed (Gen. xviii. 4) ; Abraham's servant in Mesopotamia

*The East is now undergoing many radical changes. Nearly all the streets of Jerusalem are now illuminated with the latest form of incandescent oil lamps, while the three or four principal streets have the electric light. The same means of illumination may be seen in Damascus in "the street called Straight."

(Gen. xxiv. 32); and Joseph's brethren in Egypt (Gen. xliii. 24). It was, and still is, the universal custom in the East. It was the work of slaves or lowest menials. When Abigail of Carmel wished to express her sense of deepest humility, she could use no stronger expression than "Behold, let thine handmaid be a slave to wash the feet of the servants of my lord" (1 Sam. xxv. 41 —see also Luke vii. 38, 44; John xiii. 5, 10; and Song v. 3). Hence our Lord's lesson of humility when He washed His disciples' feet. The Pharisee, on the other hand, showed his contempt for our Lord by not having His feet washed when he had invited Him to a feast (Luke vii. 44).

St. Luke xi. 38 comes as a great surprise to many readers of the Bible who have not learnt to "think orientally," and are possibly more inclined to side with the Pharisee than with our Lord. But our Lord was at that moment condemning a piece of rabbinic ritual which did not at all encourage cleanliness. Water was poured on each hand in turn, the fingers outstretched, while the finger-tips met. The hands were not rubbed with the object of removing the dirt, nor was any soap used. Indeed, a dirty hand remained dirty after this ceremonial washing. The Pharisees demanded this observance with no idea of encouraging cleanliness, but with the sole object of obtaining the blind obedience of their adherents. This is what our Lord deliberately condemned; while it furthermore exposed the hollow mockery of other religious observances which left the soul uncleansed.

Orthodox Jews still carry out this "tradition of the elders."

Eastern Bottles.—These are made of goat-skins, cleaned out and made water-tight. They are of various sizes, and used, not only for water, but for wine (2 Sam. xvi. 1; Jer. xiii. 12; 1 Sam. i. 24; x. 3; and xvi. 20); and milk (Judges iv. 19). Oil was generally stored in earthen vessels. Our Lord refers to *skin bottles* when He says, "New wine must be put into new bottles," and for a very good reason. Old bottles are weak, and when the wine is fermenting will burst (Matt. ix. 17; Job xxxii. 19).

Part of the process of tanning and drying consists in exposing these skin bottles to a very slow fire and smoke. Hundreds of these inflated goat-skins may be seen in the Hebron factories, where most of these bottles are made, covered with smoke and soot, hideously ugly and unappetising. To such a skin David compares himself on one occasion (Ps. cxix. 83).

The large skin bottles are carried by men only, a smaller size being carried by women. The bottle which Abraham gave to Hagar was of the latter kind (Gen. xxi. 14).

Pitchers and Jugs, called sometimes *bottles of clay*, to distinguish them from skins (Jer. xix. 1), are still carried to the fountain or well, and by *women* only. See the case of Rebekah (Gen. xxiv. 14), and the

woman of Samaria (John iv. 28). So exceptional was it for a *man* to carry a pitcher of water, that our Lord was able to send His two disciples into the crowded streets of Jerusalem with the assurance that they would experience no difficulty in identifying the "goodman" who would allow them to meet in his house—they were to follow *a man* bearing *a pitcher* of water. They were likely to meet many women carrying pitchers, and men carrying skin bottles, but he would be the only man bearing a pitcher (Mark xiv. 13; Luke xxii. 10).

Handmills are found in every household. People, especially in the villages and small country towns, grind their own corn, and it is work which has to be done daily, for people only bake enough for one day's consumption. Being so necessary a household requisite, without which the daily food could not be prepared, we see the forethought of a loving Father who forbad any part of a millstone being taken as a pledge (Deut. xxiv. 6). Women grind, bake, and knead daily, and the whole process does not occupy more than about half-an-hour. The handmill consists of two heavy millstones, the upper one and the lower. Two women sit facing one another and grind together on account of the weight of the stone (Matt. xxiv. 41). Grinding is always the work of *women and slaves* (Ex. xi. 5). The Philistines were, therefore, heaping the greatest indignity on Samson when they made him *grind in the prison house* (Judges xvi. 21). Jeremiah laments the fact that the Babylonians "*took the young men* to grind" (Lam. v. 13). Isaiah foretells that at the

destruction of their city the Babylonian ladies would be engaged in performing the slaves' work of *grinding* (Isa. xlvii. 2). The *sound of the grinding*, though not by any means musical, is nevertheless pleasant to the ears of Easterns, for it is always associated with home comfort, prosperity and plenty. Hence the days must be very evil "*when the sound of the grinding is low*" (Eccles. xii. 4).

The *kneading-trough* is also found in every home. It is made of wood, and of various sizes. Women may still be seen daily carrying their kneading-troughs on their heads going to the public bake-ovens. Unleavened cakes are always baked when a meal has to be hastily prepared (Ex. xii. 34, 39). Frogs in the Egyptian kneading-troughs must have been peculiarly odious (Ex. viii. 3). God promised to bless the kneading-troughs, *i.e.*, the bread or food, of the Israelites if they obeyed Him (Deut. xxviii. 5).

The village loaf, known as the "Khubez taboon," is quite flat and not much larger than a pancake. It is generally soft and is never cut with a knife, being always broken with the hand. It should be noted that this was the custom in Bible times. We always read of bread *being broken*.

It constantly happens that no bread is left in the house after supper. Should visitors arrive then, it would necessitate the fresh grinding, kneading and baking, or the chance borrowing of some bread from

neighbours. In the parable in Luke xi. 5-8, our Lord makes a man ask from a neighbour for *three loaves* for *one man.* Evidently, the loaves of New Testament times were not larger than they are to-day.

CHAPTER V

EASTERN DRESS

THE *eastern fashions* are as changeless as the changeless sun. There is every reason to believe that, with some slight modifications, the people we meet with in the Holy Land to-day, are wearing the same garments as were worn in the days of Abraham, David, or our Lord. Commentators and translators alike have failed to appreciate the importance of the study of eastern customs and manners with the object of elucidating many passages; and, as a consequence, many a verse which should be easily understood is mystified.

One general rule should be observed, clothing in the east always marks the social rank of the wearer. It does so to-day, and it did so in Bible times. Hence in studying this subject we shall not only be examining articles of dress, we shall be learning much of *the character and social position of the wearers.* In many cases the difference between one man's costume and another's may be slight, but it always marks social position or rank, religion, or even home and country. This is referred to in the Bible. The woman of

Samaria at once recognised our Lord to be a Jew ; no doubt by his garments (John iv. 9). Referring to St. John the Baptist, our Lord intimated the fact that people were not attracted to him on account of any pretensions to rank or station in life ; He, therefore, contrasts the difference between *his rough garments* and those of the noblemen and courtiers who wore *soft raiment* (Matt. xi. 8). " Wherein lies the attraction of this man in the wilderness, for when you go out into the wilderness, you see a peasant and not a prince," our Lord is practically saying. John the Baptist wore the garments of a poor peasant, consisting of a mantle of camel's hair and a leather girdle (Matt. iii. 4). Elijah is at once recognised by his clothing (2 Kings i. 8) ; and it appears that his clothing became the token of all prophets, false and true (Zech. xiii. 4). Now the Baptist's clothing being the same as Elijah's, must at once have attracted the Jews, who were expecting Elijah in person (Mal. iv. 4, 5 ; Matt. xvii. 11 ; Mark ix. 11).

The commonest and probably one of the oldest garments is *the eastern mantle*, called 'Abbayeh by the Arabs. It is made of camel's hair (Gen. xxv. 25 ; Matt. iii. 4 ; Zech. xiii. 4), very coarse and rather shapeless. Generally, in two colours, white and brown or brown and black. Red ones are worn by women only. (Why will artists persist in making the most absurd mistakes? There is a well-known picture of the Prodigal Son's return, which graces many a schoolroom or Mission Hall, and the father is seen wearing *his wife's mantle!*

—*a thing he would never do.* A man would sooner go without his mantle than put on any article of dress belonging to a woman. It is an abomination to Orientals to-day, just as it was to the Israelites. It was forbidden by the Law, Deut. xxii. 5).

Among the poor people the mantle by day forms the only covering by night. That it was used for a similar purpose in Bible times is seen in Ex. xxii. 26,27, and Deut. xxiv. 12, 13. A mantle pledged had to be returned at sunset, for "*that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin; wherein shall he sleep?*" Showing again God's gracious provision for the wants and comforts of the poor. Amos condemns the people of his day for breaking this law (Amos ii. 8. See Revised Version). When Sisera went to sleep, Jael covered him with a mantle (Judges iv. 18). A mantle is not only given in pledge for a debt, but also as a token that a certain promise connected with some business transaction will be kept (see Deut. xxiv. 10-13). This is done to this day, and is called 'Arabon, the same as one of the Hebrew words.

A coat without seam is a mantle of the same material, shape and colour, but consists of *one piece only.* They are still worn by the peasant classes in the north. Remember our Lord came from the north (John xix. 23). The famous coat of Treves cannot be the identical one worn by our Lord, as its appearance, shape, material and colour are altogether different from the

'Abayehs—the best proof that the famous coat is a fraud.

There are mantles of softer material though of the same shape, worn by the *effendis* or gentry. These are the "Soft Raiment" of Matt. xi. 8.

Girdles are worn by all, rich and poor alike. But there is a great difference in the material. The peasants and Bedouins wear leathern girdles. Elijah and John the Baptist belonged to this class (2 Kings i. 8; Matt. iii. 4; Mark i. 6).

Soft leather girdles are worn by the Bethlehem gentlemen. They form an intermediate class, higher than the actual peasant, but somewhat lower than the townsfolk. Their girdles therefore are not quite so coarse.

The soft girdles, made of silk or linen, are worn by the upper classes. *Again soft raiment!*

Some are even *worked in gold* (see Dan. x. 5; Jer. xiii. 1; Ezek. xvi. 10; and Rev. i. 13 and xv. 6).

Girdles are worn by all men, women and children. When resting they are taken off; and they "*gird their loins*" when preparing for work or for a journey. They are strapped as firmly as possible, and serve as a support and stay in working, running, or riding. Hence the order, "*Gird up thy loins*," always meant—"prepare

for action" (Luke xii. 37 and xvii. 8; Acts xii. 8; Ex. xii. 11). Elijah girded up his loins when hurrying from Carmel with Ahab (1 Kings xviii. 46). See also Gehazi running to Shunem (2 Kings iv. 29 and ix. 1). A girdle could be given as a present (2 Sam. xviii. 11). Symbolically, the act of girding the loins meant, "Be prepared for action, now is not your rest" (Luke xii. 35; 1 Pet. i. 13; and Eph. vi. 14). It was foretold that the Messiah would be girded with righteousness and faithfulness (Isa. xi. 5). Some of the girdles contain small pockets, where money and other valuables are kept. (See Revised Version of Matt. x. 9, where our Lord says, "*Get you no gold nor silver nor brass in your girdles.*") The word *purses* is a mistranslation. The scribe also carried his ink-horn in his belt (Ezek. ix. 2, 11). For "*by his side*" read "upon his loins," or in his girdle.

The stomacher of Isa. iii. 24, was probably a beautiful sash worn as a girdle by ladies. They are still worn, and are often of exquisite workmanship, worked in silk and gold.

Priests were commanded to wear *linen* clothes (Ex. xxviii. 42; Lev. vi. 10; 1 Sam. ii. 18, and xxii. 18). They were *effendis—gentlemen.* Prophets wore coarse clothing (Zech. xiii. 4 : 2 Kings i. 8; Matt. iii. 4). They were *fellaheen—peasants.* Much food for thought here! When those who should have been the shepherds of the sheep proved faithless to their trust (Jer. xxiii. 1, 2), God, in very irony, chose servants from the lower orders.

Under the mantle is worn a tunic very much in the shape of a dressing-gown. The poorest wear them rather short, not reaching much below the knee. The sheikh wears one coloured, and much longer, and with *long sleeves*. The longer the sleeves, the more respectable the wearer. Joseph's "coat of many colours" was really a long-sleeved robe, worn only by the chief and his heir (Gen. xxxvii. 3). Tamar's robe is called by the same name (2 Sam. xiii. 18). Among the Bedouins the chief will often be distinguished not so much by the richer material of his robes as by the long sleeves of almost exactly the same shape as surplice sleeves ; and his eldest son or heir will also have the privilege of wearing them. This would account for the jealousy of the elder brothers. It was not the fact that Joseph's coat was more beautiful than theirs, but what it implied. It meant that Jacob wished his youngest son to be the heir.

Coats of many colours are nevertheless worn, and are very popular. They are generally called robes in the Bible (1 Sam. ii. 19, xxviii. 14, xv. 27, xviii. 4 ; 1 Chron. xv. 27 ; Ezra ix. 3, 5 ; Ezek. xxvi. 16).

Sandals are worn by the very poorest only ; and are fastened to the foot with straps, called *Latchets* (Matt. iii. 11 ; Mark i. 7 ; Luke iii. 16) ; showing that our Lord wore sandals. So also St. Peter (Acts xii. 8).

Gentlemen's Shoes are of soft leather, and generally yellow. Shoes of seal-skin or porpoise-skin are re-

ferred to in Ezek. xvi. 10. Ladies wear beautifully worked slippers, in gold and silver, and often ornamented with a variety of colours. They are mentioned in Ezek. xvi. 10.

Shoes are always removed when entering a room or a sacred place (Ex. iii. 5 ; Josh. v. 15). Hence the shoe is always connected with everything low and contemptible. To unloose the shoe was the duty of a slave (Matt. iii. 11 ; John i. 27). Very strong, therefore, was the expression of Amos, that the rulers and oppressors had "*sold . . . the poor for a pair of shoes*" (Amos ii. 6 and viii. 6). "To cast the shoe upon" anyone meant to degrade and humble him. "Over Edom will I cast out my shoe" (Ps. lx. 8) meant : I will disgrace and conquer Edom.

To walk barefooted was a sign of *mourning* (2 Sam. xv. 30 ; Isa. xx. 2, 4 ; or *slavery* (2 Chron. xxviii. 15) ; or *poverty* (Luke xv. 22, and xxii. 35).

Some coats worn by roving shepherds are the rough *Sheep-skin Jackets.* They are quite in keeping with the wild, roving life of the shepherd. They are sometimes not even made into jackets, the piece of sheepskin being simply wrapped round the body, and tied round with some string or rope. Heb xi. 37 implies that the persecuted ones lived a wild, fugitive life. (See *Shepherd Life.*)

A very peculiar headdress is the *Syrian Horn*, which

is worn by women in the north, and is fast becoming extinct. The white veil is thrown right over the horn, and hangs gracefully down the shoulders, making the woman appear very tall. It is supposed to be referred to in the passages, "*Mine horn is exalted*" (1 Sam. ii. 1. See also 2 Sam. xxii. 3 ; Ps. lxxv. 4).

Veils are worn by all women, though it is only the towns' women who veil the face. They are of different sizes and material. The peasants wear veils almost as large as a sheet, thrown back from their head. They do not hide their faces.

The *Bethlehem Veil* is of this kind. Boaz emptied six measures of barley into it. Ruth iii. 15. In the margin it is called a *sheet.* It was indeed a *sheet veil.* Women may still be seen carrying sheaves of corn in their veils. To remove the veil from a woman is to insult her (Song v. 7).

CHAPTER VI

SOME EASTERN CHARACTERS

THE *Eastern Shepherd.*—The rough garments he wears are but a reflex of the wild life he lives. Wandering about the wild mountains, taking his sheep and goats to "green pastures" and "still waters" (Ps. xxiii. 2), he is often away from home for many weeks at a time. Jacob refers to this when he says to Laban, "In the day the drought consumed me, and *the frost by night*" (Gen. xxxi. 40). Of course there are shepherds who are able to lead their flocks home by night, and take them out again by day; but these are the exception.

Shepherds are either slaves, or the youngest sons, or daughters. Taking care of the sheep is considered very low and menial work. It will be remembered that the youngest son of Jesse was the shepherd, while the elder sons were engaged in the far more honourable occupation of warring or hunting (1 Sam. xvii. 13, 15). It will also be remembered that Rachel looked after her father's sheep (Gen. xxix. 9); and Jethro's daughters did the same (Ex. ii. 16, 17). One remarkable exception is to be found in the case of Jacob's sons, and this throws an altogether fresh light on the jealousy of Joseph's brethren. Jacob reverses the

general rule and custom when he makes the elder sons the shepherds, while the younger ones stop at home. This no doubt was one of the reasons why they hated their young brother.

Shepherds are always armed with a formidable club, called Nabbuteh. With these they defend themselves and their sheep against any attacks from robbers or wild beasts. No doubt David attacked the lion and the bear with a Nabbuteh. When climbing up the mountains he is supported by a long *Staff*, called Assayeh. With staff and rod David went against Goliath (1 Sam. xvii. 40). This evoked the grim wrath of the giant, "Am I *a dog* that thou comest to me with staves?" (1 Sam xvii. 43). There is a beautiful allusion to the Nabbuteh and the Assayeh in Ps. xxiii. 4, "Thy *rod* and Thy *staff* they comfort me." David is comparing God's protection to the rod, His support to the staff.

Slings are made by the shepherds themselves, and used when their sheep stray too far away. They do not hit the sheep, for that would kill it, but they throw the stone near enough to frighten it. They are also used to drive away either thieves or wild beasts. As the slings are in daily use, shepherds become very proficient, and can often "hit at a hair's breadth" (Judges xx. 16).

Smooth Stones are taken from the rough torrent bed, and kept in their pouches (see 1 Sam. xvii).

Slings were also used in warfare: we read of the *slingers* in 2 Kings iii. 25; 2 Chron. xxvi. 14, and of those who could "sling stones *at a hair's breadth*" (Judges xx. 16).

The Scribe is described to us in Ezek. ix. 2, 3, clothed in linen and having the ink-horn by his side, or rather in his belt or girdle. Customs have not changed since the days of Ezekiel! Very few people can write. The scribe is therefore a man of considerable importance in a town or village, for he may be the only person in a community who can read or write a letter. Fortunately, through the enterprise of Christian Missions, the scribes are beginning to lose much of their importance, schools having now been established in every part of the country. But the pioneer of education in the land was the London Jews' Society. Few people are aware of the incalculable blessing this Society has been, and still is, to the cause of the Gospel in the East!

The inspired Psalmist speaks of his tongue being as ready to proclaim the attributes of the coming Messiah as "a ready writer" is to write a letter from dictation (Ps. xlv. 1).

The Sakkah, or Water Carrier. Water has often to be brought from a distance, for no water-supply exists in most eastern cities. It has to be carried in *skin bottles*. The Sakkah walks through the streets shouting, "*He ya, 'atchan, tahaloo yishraboo.*" "Ho, ye

thirsty ones, come ye and drink "—the same cries were heard in the streets of Jerusalem in the days of Isaiah! (Isa. lv. 1). Note the difference and the sharp *contrast*, no doubt, intended by the passage referred to. The "living" water is *given*, not bought; this should always be emphasized in passages of a similar character (John vii. 37; Rev. xxi. 6, and xxii. 17). The word *freely* should be *emphatic*, the idea being that the spiritual water is given without money and without price.

There are cases where a man wishing to perform an act of charity, will pay for all the water contained in a skin bottle, or all the bread carried by a baker's boy. The water and bread are then freely distributed amongst the poor. The seller will then change his cry and will literally call out, "Ho, ye thirsty ones, come and drink to-day for nothing, for nothing." The word "balash" means freely, without payment.

The Baker's Boy.—These lads are seen with their baskets on their heads, selling small loaves of bread wherever people congregate. No doubt the "*lad who had five barley loaves and two small fishes*" was the baker's boy, who, seeing crowds going out into the wilderness, knew he would be very welcome there with his bread, and he must have been very successful since only five were left (John vi. 9).

Singing girls are professional singers and *professional mourners.* At weddings they are bright and

cheerful, at funerals they look sad and dejected. They "rejoice with those that rejoice, and weep with those that weep" (Rom. xii. 15). They are also very skilful in the art of improvising. They are born poetesses. They make up the words without any preparation as they sing, and know how to touch some tender chord connected with the life of those present, thus making them mourn. The Bible speaks of singing *men* as well as of singing women (2 Sam. xix. 35 ; 2 Chron. xxxv. 25 ; Ezra ii. 65 ; Neh. vii. 67).

The Dervish.—Very wild and weird he looks with his long hair—a sign of special sanctity to-day. (May this not be a remnant of the ancient custom of the Nazarites? Num. vi. 2, 13, 18 ; Judges xiii. 5 ; Amos ii. 12.) The modern Dervish is the true representative of the prophets of Baal. To this day he delights numberless sightseers in the market places by cutting himself with a knife, and piercing his cheeks with a sharp iron skewer (1 Kings xviii. 28). That the prophets of Baal did the same is evident from the expression, "They cut themselves after their manner." It appears, too, to have been a custom for people to show their grief by *cutting themselves* (Jer. xvi. 6, xli. 5, and xlvii. 5). This was forbidden in the Law (Lev. xix. 28 and Deut. xiv. 1).

CHAPTER VII

EASTERN TOILET AND ORNAMENTS

LIKE all oriental races, the Jews are very fond of ornaments. We are therefore not surprised to find many references to them in the Scriptures. We must mention first of all the toilet bottles or Kuhol vessels. Ladies always paint their eyelashes and eyebrows with black powder kept in these vessels. The small probe is first moistened, then dipped in the bottle, and next passed lightly over the eyelashes and eyebrows. This is done with the object of making the eyes *appear* large, Easterns being very fond of large eyes. This is referred to in Jer. iv. 30. Jezebel painted *her eyes*—not the face, as in the Authorised Version (2 Kings ix. 30—see Revised Version).

Shaving was forbidden by the Law (Lev. xxi. 5). The Jews are therefore always depicted as *wearing beards*. Remember the ambassadors of David who had to stop in Jericho till *their beards were grown* (2 Sam. x. 4, 5).

Just as shaving was a disgrace in Palestine, so wearing the beard *was a disgrace in Egypt.* There men always shaved. Joseph shaved before he went in unto Pharaoh (Gen. xli. 14).

Mirrors were in use long before the Israelites brought their mirrors to Moses and Aaron (Ex. xxxviii. 8). They were made of pieces of polished metal, giving only a dim reflection of the face, hence the force of St. Paul's saying, "Now we see through *a glass* darkly" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). Such a mirror is also referred to in 2 Cor. iii. 18, and James i. 23. Isaiah foretells that the Israelite women would have their glasses (literally mirrors) taken away from them (Isa. iii. 23).

Ornaments in shape of a half-moon, called "round tires like the moon" in Isa. iii. 18, are worn round the necks of women, and often put by princes and kings round the necks of their horses or camels (Judges viii. 21—see margin).

Plaited Hair.—Women wear their hair hanging down, but in many plaits. The number of the plaits must always be odd. They sometimes have eleven, thirteen, nineteen—always an odd number. St. Peter advises the Christian women to think more of the "beauty of holiness" than the outward adornment of plaited hair (1 Peter iii. 3).

Jewellery.—All Orientals are fond of jewellery, and

from their frequent mention in the Bible it would appear that this was the case then.

The ornaments worn are of various kinds ; some are of glass or seeds strung together, others are of metal, brass, bronze, silver and gold.

The poor peasants always wear glass rings and bracelets. These are manufactured in Hebron and elsewhere, and worn by all women and girls. Blue is the favourite colour, indeed it is the colour of most charms.

Tinkling Ornaments, containing small bells or chains, are worn as bracelets, others as anklets (see Isa iii. 18-20).

Tinkling ornaments are great favourites in the East to-day.

Ear-rings and Nose-rings are both still in use, and are mentioned in the Bible. Nose-rings are mentioned in Isa. iii. 21. Notice also in particular Ezek. xvi. 12, where, instead of "I put a jewel on thy *forehead*," read "*I put a ring upon thy nose.*"

Soap.—It will probably surprise many readers to learn that Palestine has a very large soap industry. It does not look very tempting, yet it is purer than

most soap made in this country, as the pure olive oil is used in its manufacture.

Large quantities are manufactured and shipped to Egypt, N. Syria, and the Levant. Soap is twice mentioned in the Bible, in Jer. ii. 22, and Malachi iii. 2; while nitre, mentioned in Jer. ii. 22, was also a compound of soap.

CHAPTER VIII

TENTS AND TENT LIFE

IT is hardly possible to over-estimate the importance of this subject if we wish to understand many passages in God's Word. Objections raised against the Bible exist only because many passages are misunderstood, and commentators do not always throw sufficient light on them. Moreover, even believers have serious misgivings in regard to certain passages, for *they seem* so contrary to the high and holy standard of other parts of the Sacred Scriptures. One of these difficulties finds a most simple and natural solution here.

The Tent is made of thick coarse material, of goat's or of camel's hair dyed black. Tents *are always black*. Hence Solomon may well compare them to *black eyes* in Song i. 5. The cloth is made by "*tent-makers*." St. Paul, Aquila and Priscilla were weavers of the cloth from which tents are made (Acts xviii. 3). The tents are raised on poles of various sizes and of the roughest kind. The poles are held up by ropes stretched on all sides, and fastened to the ground with long tent pegs, called nails in the Bible (Judges iv. 21, 22, and v. 26).

These tents are generally put up and taken down *by women.* They do most of the menial work, and from constant practice are well accustomed in the use of the huge wooden hammer or mallet, and hammering the "nails" deep down into the ground. It was with such a *nail that Jael killed Sisera* (Judges iv. 21).

Tents are generally divided into two parts. One completely closed in for the women, the other open, for public use. In the latter half strangers are admitted (Gen. xviii. 5). No strange man is allowed to enter the woman's part of the tent. When men therefore are entertained, women pass within, and cannot be seen. Yet they can hear and even join in the conversation. In this part of the tent Abraham entertained the three angels, while, according to the Bible narrative "Sarah went within the tent," *i.e.*, she went into the woman's half, where she could hear all that was said, and even join in the conversation, without being seen (Gen. xviii. 9, 15). The various pieces of coarse cloth are often not sewn together, but *pinned* with small wooden pins, called "Taches" in Ex. xxxvi. 18. The Revised Version calls them clasps. In the Tabernacle they were made *of brass*, not of wood.

In a large encampment the chief's tent is always placed in the very centre, while all the other tents are pitched round it. This was done all through the wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness. The *Tent of their chief*—God's tent, the Tabernacle—

always occupied the centre of the encampment (Num. ii.). The chief's tent is further distinguished by a long spear about fifteen or eighteen feet in length, fixed in the ground in an upright position. This was done when King Saul sought to kill David (1 Sam. xxvi. 7). David took Saul's spear, and the Israelites must have known that David had come quite close to Saul, and near enough to kill him.

Why did Jael kill Sisera?

Has anyone ever seen a satisfactory answer? It is a great difficulty to Westerns, and yet the solution can be settled if we are prepared to do the simplest thing in the world—go to an encampment of Bedouins and learn something of their strange life. To a Bedouin nothing would be more natural than Jael's action. To understand the reason, two facts must be borne in mind.

First, the duty of entertaining strangers in the East, though an unwritten law, is yet one which even the most unprincipled would not dare to violate. Bedouins are most hospitable to strangers. Never in my wanderings have I passed an encampment of Bedouins without being at once invited to come in and rest. The words they use are almost the same as those used by Jael: "Come in, my lord, come in and rest" (Judges iv. 18).

Secondly, no strange man is permitted to enter the

woman's part of the tent. Another unwritten law declares such an one to be guilty of death, and any relation is bound to carry this law into execution. If a woman allows a stranger to enter her part of the tent *she* becomes guilty. Now, bearing this in mind, turn to Judges iv. Sisera was escaping when he passed Jael's tent. She at once, with true Eastern hospitality, invited him to enter and rest. And in his case the welcome would be all the more cordial, for in this war her people had sided with Sisera and against the Israelites (Judges iv. 17). It is very important to remember that Jael was no Jewess, but a Kenite. She of course wished him to enter the public part *only*. But as he wanted a good hiding-place, no place could be safer than the *woman's* part of the tent, for no Israelite would intrude. So, no doubt, he pushed his way and entered—of course contrary to the wishes of Jael. But this was the greatest insult to a woman, and exposed her to dishonour and even death. Her position must have been trying in the extreme. To have ordered him to leave would have probably ended in his killing her so as to save his own life, while to have allowed him to stay, would have exposed her to the anger of her husband, who would at once condemn her as faithless, and proceed to stone her to death. She therefore took the law into her own hands, and when he had fallen asleep, she pinned him to the ground.

We are told, too, in Judges iv. 19, that she gave him milk to drink when he asked for water. The

same milk is called butter in Judges v. 25. It was no doubt the *buttermilk* called *labban*, and much used all over the East. This is considered by some as an *aggravation of treachery*, but it is more likely that she gave him milk *because she had no water.* Every traveller in the East knows how scarce water is, and that it is sometimes easier to procure labban than water. Shepherds are found everywhere on the mountains, and they are always ready to milk the goats and quench the thirst of the weary traveller, while the milk is at once turned into labban with the object of preserving it.

She is therefore called *blessed* in Judges v. 24, not because she committed a treacherous murder, but because, while trying to defend her character and honour, she was unknowingly ridding the Israelites of a great and cruel tyrant.

CHAPTER IX

EASTERN MUSIC

PERHAPS on no subject will this little book be a more complete revelation than on that of music. It is the general impression that the musical instruments of the Bible were capable of producing musical effects similar to those of a complete modern orchestra.

Orientals have *no idea of harmony.* They sing in unison. And instruments are only used as an accompaniment. Instrumental music, strictly speaking, does not exist. Nor, as far as we are aware, did it in Bible times. When we read "Praise the Lord with lute and harp," etc. (Ps. xxxiii. 2; cl. 3), it meant *sing* to the Lord, and accompany the singing with lute and harp.

People sang and played in unison, and the music was, as it is to-day, of the most primitive character. This is very plainly shown by the very names given to musical instruments. In Amos vi. 5, we read of K'elai Shir, invented by King David, *i.e.*, *instrument of song.*

The principal instruments of music are :—

The Harp.—It is the first one mentioned in the Bible (Gen. iv. 21), and consisted of an instrument with many strings, called in Hebrew Kinnor, in Arabic Kannun. From the frequency with which it is mentioned in the Bible, it would appear to have been the national instrument of the Jews. It seems always to have been associated with joy and gladness. Hence in captivity "they hung their harps upon the willows" (Ps. cxxxvii. 2).

From David's time it seems to have been generally associated with the worship of Jehovah. Hence the word "Kinnor" is more often mentioned in the Psalms than any instrument. David, as a lad, played on the Kinnor (1 Sam. xvi. 16-23), and to its accompaniment sang some of his sweet Psalms. Neginoth comes from Hebrew Nagan "to play," and is always connected with the harp. (Literally "to harp upon the harp.") When Elisha sent for a minstrel (2 Kings iii. 15), the word is Nagan, again from the same root, hence a proper translation would be Harper. It is interesting to compare some of David's Psalms which have the title Neginoth. Some of these, if sung by David before Saul, would have inspired the morose king to something like confidence in God. (See Ps. iv. 8 : "I will lay me down in peace and sleep." And again, Ps. vi., "A prayer for recovery from bodily or mental affliction.") Again in Ps. lv., after complaining of sad distress, he adds the comfortable

words (v. 22), "Cast thy burden upon the Lord." Ps. lxi. is a prayer to God to preserve and prolong the king's life. (V. 6) "Thou shalt prolong the king's life." Very suggestive, too, is the petition in v. 7: "O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him."

It must have been very unusual for a poor shepherd to be able to play the Kinnor. Shepherds only play the flute or pipe. David, the shepherd lad, must, therefore, have been noted far and wide as the talented shepherd who could play the harp. No wonder that even Saul's courtiers had heard of him (1 Sam. xvi. 18).

The Organ, like the harp, was the earliest invented instrument. Called Ugav in Hebrew (Gen. iv. 21). It consists of reeds of different lengths, the player passing his mouth from one to the other. It is the well-known Pan's pipe, the primitive organ. Besides the passage in Genesis, it is mentioned with Kinnor only in Job xxi. 12 and xxx. 31. Is it not curious that these two earliest instruments, invented by Jubal, should be mentioned by Job only, with just one exception? May not this be an internal evidence of the antiquity of the book? It is also mentioned once with a long list of other instruments in Ps. cl. 4.

The Pipe was a plain reed either single or double, and played like the modern flute and oboe. They are the favourite instruments of shepherds, as they are easily made, and easily played. Called in Hebrew

Khalil. Notice plural form in the title of Ps. v., Nehiloth. They are connected with travelling in Isa. xxx. 29, and are mentioned in 1 Sam. x. 5 and 1 Kings i. 40. From these three passages it would appear that they were in ancient times connected with religious worship, hence the sad degeneracy of the people when they used "the harp, viol, tabret, pipe," in their drunken feasts (Isa. v. 12).

The Viol was a one-stringed instrument, and the prototype of the modern violin; though there appear to have been Viols with more than one string. In Ps. xcii. 3 we read of a ten-stringed Nevel, also in Ps. cxliv. 9. Dr. Stainer thinks it was the harp. It seems to have been a very popular instrument from the frequency with which it is mentioned. It is sometimes translated Viol in Isa. v. 12, xiv. 11; Amos v. 23 and vi. 5; and sometimes *Psaltery* in 1 Sam. x. 5; 2 Sam. vi. 5; 1 Kings x. 12; 1 Chron. xvi. 5. To still further bewilder the Bible reader the word Nevel is translated in the Prayer-book Psalter Lute. It should therefore be remembered, that Viol, Psaltery and Lute are one and the same instrument.

The next instrument is *the Horn, or Trumpet.* The Hebrew word is Shofar, the ram's horn, and Khatzozerah, a metal trumpet, sometimes translated Cornet. Trumpets were used as war-signals (see Josh. vi. 4, etc.; Judges iii. 27; 1 Sam. xiii. 3; 2 Sam. xviii. 16, etc.). Also on certain religious festivals, in ushering in the year of Jubilee (Lev. xxv. 9), and at the Feast of

Trumpets (Lev. xxiii. 24 and Num. xxix. 1). This is still kept by the Jews. It was also used at the coronation of a king (1 Kings i. 34; 2 Kings ix. 13; 2 Chron. xxiii. 13). With the Shophar Joab recalled the scattered Israelites (2 Sam. ii. 28). And with the Shophar, God will restore scattered Israel (Isa. xxvii. 13). And with the Shophar, called Salpynx, in 1 Cor. xv. 52, God will call the armies of the dead at the last day. "The trumpet shall sound." Some of the Khatzozerah, or silver trumpets, are seen on the bas-reliefs on the Arch of Titus.

The "Day of blowing of Trumpets" (see Num. xxix. 1-6), celebrated on the 1st day of the seventh month Tishri, was the civil New Year of the Jews, while the first day of Nisan was the religious New Year. The Jews continue to this day to regard the Feast of Trumpets as their New Year's Day. It is kept with great solemnity; the Jews believing that God then sits in judgment, weighing the sins and merits of the people, and their life or death during that year will depend upon whether their merits or sins weigh heaviest. The typical Jewish greeting on that day is generally expressed with the words, "May you be written for a good year." May not the mention of *trumpets* in connection with the Last Day, in the New Testament have its origin in this Jewish tradition?

The Sackbut is an instrument resembling the Scotch bagpipe.

Of *Instruments of Percussion* we have the Timbrels, the modern tambourine. Used on all festive occasions. Hebrew word Tzeltzelim, from a word meaning to make a rustling, rumbling noise. like the noise of the wings of a swarm of locusts. It is generally translated Cymbals. (See 2 Sam. vi. 5 ; 1 Chron. xv. 16 ; 2 Chron. v. 12 ; Ezra iii. 10.)

The Cymbals (Hebrew Metziltaim), a dual form showing they consist of two metal plates which are struck together, producing a sharp, clashing sound. This is translated cymbals in Ezra iii. 10, and Neh. xii. 27. Even the Revised Version confuses the Tzilzelim and Metziltaim.

The Tabret (Hebrew Toph, Arabic Duff) is the oriental representative of the modern drum.

They are of various shapes and sizes. The smaller ones are chiefly used by females. With this *Toph* the women came out to meet Saul (1 Sam. xviii. 6). With it Miriam and the women of Israel sang their Psalm of Victory (Ex. xv. 20). It is called the adornment of women (Jer. xxxi. 4). With the Toph Jephthah's daughter met her father (Judges xi. 34), and thus "brought him very low." There is also an interesting *play of words* in connection with this instrument in Isa. xxx. 32, 33. The place *Tophet* seems forced until you see its allusion to the instrument Toph in v. 32. The play of words is a thoroughly oriental custom, of which there are frequent specimens in the Bible. It

would make many dark passages clear if such instances were always explained by a note. There is another in Jer. i. 11, 12. Almond tree is "*Shâked*" in Hebrew. "I will hasten" is *Shoked.* (See Revised Version.) There is another in Isa. v. 7. "I looked for judgment (Hebrew Mishpat), and behold oppression (mispakh); for righteousness (tzedaka); and behold a cry (tze'aka)."

Eastern songs are very primitive. One very popular one begins with the expression "*Ah ya-la-lallee.*" It is an expression of joy, without any meaning. Yet probably a similar expression may have originated the Hebrew word "hallel" (to rejoice), from which our *Hallelujah* is taken.

Love songs are the Oriental's greatest delight. He will sing, and others will listen, for hours. The expressions with which he greets his love are very beautiful. The words dove, gazelle, sparkling fountain, beautiful gardens, the rose, the lily, the eyes, etc., are familiar and favourite expressions. Then it should be remembered that the oriental story of love is simple and pure. Expressions which when translated into an European language seem harsh and coarse, are very sweet and touching in an eastern garb. Nay, more than this, expressions that would never be used in polite society in England, are used in the most simple and natural manner in the east. It should be remembered that the disuse of such expressions is not always a sign of refinement; nor the use of them a proof of the want

of refinement. This should be always remembered when reading the Song of Solomon. In fact, before reading it, we must throw away western ideas, and try and live and think like an Eastern; then that book becomes one of the choicest in the Bible. Westerns cannot understand it, for the term love has been dragged to the very dust in this age of novels of the lowest kind, and by the reports of the proceedings of the Divorce Courts. Westerns sometimes speak of "falling in love" as though it were a joke to be laughed at. To a true Eastern, love is a sacred word, and he would no more think of making it a subject of mirth than of laughing at religion.

CHAPTER X

JEWISH RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES

MODERN Judaism is to a great extent not the religion of Moses and the Prophets. It contains the shell but not the kernel. Many laws found in the books of Moses cannot be kept, and many laws, not emanating from Moses or any inspired teacher, have superseded them, and are held with a tenacity and zeal worthy of a better cause.

One of the greatest features of Modern Judaism is a curious admixture of superstition on the one hand, and a loose teaching on the other hand on many subjects of vital importance, such as the Inspiration of God's Holy Word, the Doctrine of the Atonement, Sacrifices, and the Messiah. Many of these superstitions are very ancient, and were already in existence in our Lord's day.

No Jew will say his daily prayers without wearing the *Phylacteries.* They are small square boxes covered over with leather, in which are contained the four passages which command the Jews to bind the law "as frontlets between their eyes, and upon their arms" (Ex. xiii. 2-10, xiii. 11-16; Deut. vi. 4-9, xi. 13-21).

One is worn on the forehead and the other on the arm. The Jews took those passages in their strictly literal sense, whereas God meant them to be taken figuratively; a mistake which others besides Jews have made, not only in the interpretation of the Old but of the New Testament.

By "binding them upon the forehead" God wanted them to have the whole law *in* their heads—they were to *know it*; and by "binding it upon the arm" God wanted them to *do* it, *i.e.*, to obey the law.

They have to be prepared most carefully, otherwise they are useless. The Talmud says that even God wears Phylacteries, though with what object we are not told. They are of various sizes, the largest being worn by the strict Jews, the modern Pharisees. "They make broad their Phylacteries" (Matt. xxiii. 5) meant wearing the largest size so as to appear very pious before men.

The preparing of the Phylacteries is most minutely described in the Talmud, and the slightest infringement of these rules would render them unfit for use. Special reed pens have to be used, special leather only may be employed, even the writing has to be on a certain number of lines; the length and width of the straps with which they are fastened to the forehead and arm—even the shape of the knots—all follows most carefully prescribed Rabbinic rules; and the verses written by a great Rabbi would enhance

their value. Thus have Jews made the Word of God of none effect through their traditions (Mark vii. 13).

The Jewish boy begins to wear the Phylacteries at the age of twelve or thirteen, when he goes through the ceremony of *Bar-mitzvah*, similar to our Confirmation service. On that day he has to stand up in the synagogue and read the portion of the Law. It is very possible that our Lord was taken up from Nazareth to Jerusalem at the age of twelve with the object of being confirmed (Luke ii. 42).

The next thing a Jew has to put on is the *Talith*. This is the *praying robe* worn over the head. It contains the *Zizith or fringes*, which they reverently touch and kiss. This was commanded:—"Thou shalt wear thee fringes to the borders of thy garments" (Num. xv. 38, 39, and Deut. xxii. 12). This fringe was intended as a mark of distinction between God's people and the surrounding nations on the principle of "*be ye separate*" (2 Cor. vi. 17); a law which many Christians break to-day by conforming to worldly practices. God's people of old were not even *to dress* like the heathen nations around them. There is every reason to believe that this law was kept for many centuries. But during the Maccabæan persecution, the fact that Jews could so easily be distinguished by their dress, exposed them to great persecution, and the Jewish leaders, as a matter of expediency, allowed Jews to wear *the fringe in an inner robe*, and only use the fringe on an outer robe

during the hour of prayer. This they have continued to do to this day. But it is likely that the more strict Jews continued to wear the fringe on an outer garment. Our Lord's "*hem of His garment*" was the *Zizith* (Luke viii. 44; Matt. ix. 22). And just as the Pharisees "made broad their Phylacteries," so they "enlarged the borders of their garments" (Matt. xxiii. 5). The *talith* is generally a bride's present to the bridegroom, and the text is her own work.

Women never wear the Talith or Phylacteries, they are not obliged to pray.

Fixed to the right-hand door-post of every Jewish house is the *Mezuzah*, or *door-post*. The idea is taken from Deut. vi. 9. A piece of parchment upon which are written in Hebrew the following verses: Deut. vi. 4-9 and xi. 13-21, rolled up and put in a case made of wood, tin, or glass. The case contains a small opening showing the Hebrew word "*Shaddai*," which means Almighty. The case is nailed in the right-hand door-post of every Jewish home, and every pious Jew passing by, reverently touches and kisses it. The Jews consider the *Mezuzah* a charm, keeping away the evil spirits. They flee away whenever they see the Great Name. Hence the Jews apply Ps. cxxi. 5, "the Lord is *thy Keeper*," to the Mezuzah.

The Sabbath is still most rigidly kept by Jews, particularly in eastern countries. A Jew will not even open a letter on the Sabbath Day. Many Christians

may "take hold of the skirts of him that is a Jew" and learn from him how "*to keep the Sabbath Day holy*." It is a day he is bound to honour in every way. He must always have *a good meal* and put on his best clothes—all in honour of the Sabbath. It is a *comely Bride* welcomed to the house each week with a beautiful Hebrew Psalm beginning with the words, "*Enter in, my beloved one*": reminding one of the Canticles. Those who ignorantly think King Solomon held no lofty ideas when writing his spiritual Love Song should go any Friday evening and hear the Jews welcoming their Bride, their love, the Sabbath! And if such endearing terms could be used of the approaching day of rest, what words would sufficiently express one's love and devotion for the *approaching Saviour!*

Every Friday evening the wife lights the Sabbath light, called *Manora*. This is her very special privilege for which she thanks God in the words, "I thank Thee, O God, that thou hast commanded me to light the Sabbath light." This is not commanded anywhere in Scripture, it is enjoined in the Talmud, which the Jews consider to be equal in importance with the Law of Moses.

The Havdallah taper is a wax taper used at the close of each Sabbath. It is lighted, and the youngest person in the house holds it, while the head of the house takes a glass of wine and a *box of spices* called Haddas. He then pronounces a blessing while looking

at the light, tastes the wine, and smells the spices. With this ceremony the Sabbath ends.

Chanukah lights are used during the *Feast of the Dedication* (John x. 22), in commemoration of the cleansing of the Temple by Judas Maccabæus. There is a tradition that God worked a miracle in allowing a little oil in the sacred Lamp of the Temple to last eight days, thus enabling the Priests to obtain a fresh supply. Hence the feast also lasts for eight days. On the first night one lamp is lighted, on the second two, and so on, until on the eighth day all eight are burning. Each candlestick has a ninth light, from this one the others are lighted. The feast is also called the "*Feast of Lights*." The feast generally falls in December, hence the expression in John x. 22, "*It was winter*."

Jewish slaughtering knives are used by Jewish butchers in slaughtering the animals used for meat food. Jews are not allowed to buy their meat from Gentile butchers. Not only must they buy it from a Jewish butcher, but from one *who holds a licence from the Rabbi*. The Jewish slaughterer is called a *Shochet*. He uses knives called *Chalufim*, which must be as sharp as a razor. The throat of the animal is cut and held in such a position that every drop of blood escapes while yet warm, for the Jews have the greatest horror of blood. He then carefully examines the carcase, and the slightest flaw renders it unclean, or *Traifeh*. If perfectly sound it is stamped with the Rabbi's Seal and

called *Kosher*, which means clean. A Shochet is always a learned man. The care with which the best meat food is secured for their people accounts, to a great extent, for the health and longevity of the Jewish race, as compared with their Gentile neighbours.

The *British Medical Journal*, in an article on the subject of Jewish meat compared with other meat, said :—" According to a return of the Board of Agriculture the meat supply from all sources in 1892 was no less than 2,122,000 tons. In an indirect manner we can form some idea as to how much of this meat was fit for use. A return has been published of the animals slain by Jewish slaughterers at the Foreign Meat Market, Deptford, and at the Whitechapel and Aldgate Slaughter-houses. From this it may be gathered that only seventy-three per cent. of the oxen and sheep were pronounced *Kosher* (fit), the remaining twenty-seven per cent. being presumably sold to the East End artisan. Allowing that a portion of the twenty-seven per cent. was rejected on account of what may be called technical blemishes, we shall be within the mark in asserting that *ten per cent. of the meat sold each year—that is*, 212,000 *tons—is either positively diseased or unwholesome.*"

The Rabbis have complete supervision and control, and can at any time remove the licence, and issue public notice to the effect that certain butchers (*giving name and address*) are not licensed.

Lelith charms are connected with a very peculiar superstition. Lelith was the first wife of Adam, but as they did not live happily together (in Paradise!!) he turned her out and married Eve. Lelith determined in bitter hatred to revenge herself, so that to this day she seeks to destroy every new-born descendant of Eve. To prevent her evil designs, these charms are hung up in the room. This is still done by all strict Talmudic Jews. *Lelith* is mentioned in Isa. xxxiv. 14, and is translated "screech-owl." The Revised Version translates it "night-monster," but in the margin gives the original.

Mazzoth, or *unleavened bread*, is eaten by Jews during the Feast of the Passover. Unleavened cake is still eaten by the Bedouins, especially when on a march, or when food has to be hurriedly prepared for a feast (see Ex. xii. 39; Josh. v. 11, and Judges vi. 19). The bread which Sarah prepared for the three angels was also unleavened (Gen. xviii. 6).

Rolls of the Law contain the five books of Moses, and are written on parchment or on the skins of animals. No printed books are used in the reading of the Law in synagogues to-day. These are "the books" so frequently mentioned in the Bible. Such a roll our Lord *unrolled* in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke iv. 17).

Skins or pieces of parchment, are cut into squares and stitched together, and when completely unrolled are very long indeed. The rolling up of a scroll is

referred to in Isa. xxxiv. 4, and Rev. vi. 14 (Jeremiah writes his denunciations in a roll, Jer. xxxvi. 2). They are written in parallel columns, the word "*leaves*" in Jer. xxxvi. 23, which King Jehoiakim cut with a knife and threw into the fire, were not leaves or pages, *but columns* (see margin in Revised Version). They are written *on one side only*, the back of the scroll being left blank. Hence when written *on both sides* the fact would deserve to be mentioned (see Ezek. ii. 10, and Zech. v. 3). Written within and without with threatenings meant that God's judgments were *very full* and would be very severe.

On the *Feast of Purim* the whole Book of Esther is read in the synagogue. Whenever the word "Haman" occurs, the Jews have to shout and repeat the words, "May his name be blotted out." Boys use rattles, and produce a deafening noise.

The Jewish Translation of the Hebrew Bible was prepared specially for home use. As one would suppose, the meaning of every Messianic passage is altered to suit the Jewish mode of interpretation. Isaiah liii., according to modern Jewish notions, does not refer to a suffering Messiah, but to *the suffering people of Israel.* But as certain verses speak very forcibly of the great vicarious suffering, the text is somewhat altered. In verse 10, the sentence, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin," is translated "When (now) his soul hath brought the trespass offering"! Thus has God's Word been perverted.

The Misrach, which means East, is a picture hung on the eastern wall of the room, so that when praying the Jew has his face turned towards Jerusalem (Daniel vi. 19). Jews have an undying love for the Holy Land. They greet one another on their great feast days with the touching words, "*This year in captivity, next year in Jerusalem.*"

Many educated Jews have given up most of their religious observances. They cannot see the reasonableness of modern Judaism. Many have drifted into Agnosticism or open infidelity. They have never been taught to make a difference between Bible and Talmud. When, therefore, they give up the latter, they throw overboard the former as well. Such is the sad condition of Jews to-day; and how this must appeal to the heart of all true Christians! Shall we not do all we can to give them the true light—the Light of the World?

CHAPTER XI

BOTANY

PALESTINE is not much larger than Wales, yet it possesses every climate "from Iceland to the Equator." This would account for the fact that nearly every plant growing anywhere can grow in Palestine.

As it does not rain for nearly six months in the year—from April or May to September or October—the face of the country is parched and dry like the desert. All grass is burnt up by the heat, and the winter torrents and streams are dry. In the early autumn, or soon after the Feast of Tabernacles, the first showers are expected (the "early rains" of the Bible). A few weeks later the face of the country undergoes a complete change. Grass springs up, and innumerable flowers of the brightest colours grow in the greatest profusion, covering every hill and valley. It is then that Palestine looks its best. It should therefore be visited between Christmas and Easter.

A few weeks after the last rains of the season have fallen (called "latter rains" in the Bible), the summer

heat sets in, and very soon the flowers fade, the grass withers, and all is again parched and dry.

As this chapter does not profess to be for botanists, but for the general reader of God's Word, the plants described here are not given in botanical order.

1. *The Wild Flowers of Palestine.*—No mention of any flower *by name* is made in the Bible, with the exception of "the lily" in our Lord's Sermon, and the "Rose of Sharon," in the Canticles. The former of these flowers, the "lily," is generally believed to be the anemone, which grows in the greatest profusion in Galilee. Our Lord's reference to Solomon's robe, which would not be white but scarlet or crimson, confirms this. Sitting on a rock, while the crowds of people gathered around Him, our Lord had but to stoop and pluck a bunch of these brilliant flowers, hold them up to the gaze of the listening multitudes, and say, "Behold the lilies, how they grow." The "Rose of Sharon" is supposed to be the narcissus, and as the Hebrew name very closely resembles the Arabic one, it may be the case.

2. *Trees.*—(a) *The Olive Tree* is one of the most common and useful trees in the Holy Land. God promised the Israelites "a land of oil olive and honey" (Deut. viii. 7, 8). It is also considered the most valuable tree in Palestine on account of the many useful properties it possesses. The berries are a uni-

versal article of food. Again, from the berries, oil is extracted, and also used as an article of food. To this day the Arabs "dip their bread in the oil." Oil is also used for lighting purposes. It was a good cure for wounds (Luke x. 34). The twigs and branches are used for making fires, the dry roots of the decayed trees are still used for firewood; and lastly, the timber is most useful for ornamental purposes, taking a beautiful polish. It is still made up into a variety of articles both useful and ornamental. No wonder, then, that blessings in the east and in God's Holy Word are always connected with oil. The blessing of Asher (Deut. xxxiii. 24), "Let him dip his foot in oil," was an expression which every Oriental could appreciate, and wish he could claim as his own (see also Isa. lxi. 3).

In Palestine, under Turkish rule, every olive tree was taxed, and when a farmer was too poor to pay the tax he cut down the tree and sold the wood. This accounts for the fact that so few olive trees are found in many parts of the country.

(b) *The Fig Tree.* Next to the olive, this is the most important tree in Palestine. The figs are eaten green in summer; pressed and dried, they form an article of food all the year; these latter are the "cakes of figs" mentioned in 1 Sam. xxv. 18, and 1 Chron. xii. 40. The young figs appear on the trees quite a month or six weeks before the leaves;—though in very hot places the tree is never without leaves. The fruit

generally ripens in June and July, but occasionally trees are to be found producing an early crop of figs, ripening by Easter time. Such a tree must have been the one our Lord went to on the Mount of Olives. There exists such a tree in Jaffa.

(c) *The Almond* is mentioned three times only in the Bible, yet it is found growing in every part of the country. Nothing is more beautiful than to see the leafless almond tree in January or early February completely covered with the white or pink blossoms. The mention of the almond in Jer. i. 11 is interesting. There appears to be no connection between verses 11 and 12. What has the "almond tree," mentioned in verse 11, to do with God's reply to Jeremiah, "I will hasten"? There exists a play of words—a pun. In the Hebrew, "almond" and "hasten" are formed by the same letters. This brings into bold relief another startling difference between east and west — in England, a pun is a joke, sometimes clever, sometimes coarse, but always lacking in dignity; in the east, it emphasizes a point or message, and is always dignified!

(d) *The Kharoub.* A tree, also found in most parts of Palestine, with broad leaves somewhat resembling —at any rate, in the distance—the oak. It produces a long pod which turns into a black colour, the taste being coarse but sweetish. Some have considered this to be the "locust" which formed the food of St. John

the Baptist, but this is not the case, he ate the insect. These beans are generally believed to have been "the husks which the swine did eat," mentioned in St. Luke xv. 16. It is used as food for cattle, though also eaten by the very poor.

(e) *The Palm Tree* must have been found growing in all parts of Palestine, but no doubt, owing to the many wars which ravaged the country in days gone by, as well as the suicidal policy of the Turks, who taxed every tree, the palm has disappeared from many of its old haunts. Jericho, known as the city of palm trees (Deut. xxxiv. 3), can only show some young trees planted within the last few years. None are now to be found on or near the Mount of Olives.

3. *Other Plants.*—(a) *The Vine* grows most luxuriantly all over Palestine, and is mentioned in every part of the Bible. The vines are planted in the early spring, when, for perhaps two months, they look more like decayed weeds than living plants, and in that condition gave Isaiah the opportunity of comparing the Jewish nation to them (see Isa. lxv. 8). The Jew is compared to the apparently dead vine—but, says God, a blessing is in it.

During the vintage, from August to October, the grapes are collected in baskets and brought to the wine presses. These are cut out in the rock, and contain a trough for holding the grapes, and are trodden by

the feet of men. The juice flows into a lower trough, whence it is put into goat skins (Matt. ix. 17) until it has fermented. Wine presses are found everywhere, showing how universal must have been the custom of making wine.

The vine was the emblem of the Jewish nation. "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt" (Ps. lxxx. 8; see also Isa. v. 1, etc., Jer. ii. 21). It should also be noted how often our Lord used in His parables and sayings the national emblem. Unfermented wine does not exist in Palestine.

(b) *The Mandrake*, a plant also found everywhere in Palestine. It grows about 2 feet high and in the spring produces a fruit something like the small apple in size. It has a sweet but sickly taste. The root often resembles the human form, hence probably the origin of the Hebrew name, which means "love plant." It is supposed to have strange properties, and is eaten by childless wives (see Gen. xxx. 14, 15).

(c) *Thorns.* There are said to be about thirty varieties in Palestine. The commonest was probably the one plaited into the "crown of thorns." Others are used for fuel. They burn quickly and give a very great heat. "Or ever your pot be made hot with thorns" (Ps. lxi. 9). The "grass which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven" (St. Matthew vi. 6-30) no doubt consisted more of the young bushes of thorns

than of "grass." We read also of the "crackling of the thorns" (Eccles. vii. 6).

4. *Cereals.*—(a) *Wheat* is sown in December and January, and the wheat harvest is in June. In the lowlands and hot plains of the Jordan it is earlier. Most of the Palestine wheat is bearded like the English barley. Bashan, Sharon, and the Plain of Jezreel are still noted for their prolific crops. A species of wheat, sometimes called "Egyptian Wheat," contains several ears growing on one stalk.

Wheat has been grown from time immemorial. It is mentioned first in Gen. xxx. 14; but long before Jacob's day it was grown in Egypt, and in many a tomb some thousands of years old, corn is found in ancient vessels resembling the corn grown to-day.

(b) *Barley* is sown in December and January and ripens before wheat. It is generally harvested in May, though earlier in the hot valleys. Barley bread (Judges vii. 13, 2 Kings iv. 42, and John vi. 9) is still common, though used only by the poor. It is the chief grain crop in Palestine—so it must have been in Bible times, judging from its frequent mention in the Scriptures.

(c) *Lentils*, of the bean family, is very common in Palestine, and highly nutritious. It is boiled and eaten alone, or else mixed with boiled rice. The "mess of pottage" was, no doubt, made with lentils. Nicely

cooked and flavoured, it is a very appetising dish. Has the word "Lent" any connection with the eating of lentils during the fast?

(d) *Durrah* is but once mentioned in the Bible, and is translated "millet" in Ezek. iv. 9. It was though, and still is, largely cultivated in Palestine, ground into flour, made into bread, and eaten by the poor fellaheen.

(e) *Beans.* Also largely cultivated and eaten in Palestine. It forms, with lentils, and after bread, the principal food of the country, and takes the place of meat. It is only twice mentioned in the Bible (2 Sam. xvii. 28, and Ezek. iv. 9).

(f) *Tares.* The "darnel," a weed which abounds in Palestine, looking exactly like wheat till the ears are formed. This is the point our Lord wished to emphasize in the parable, "by your fruit shall ye be known." The Arabs call it zewan. As they consider it poisonous, every grain has to be removed by the women before they can grind their corn (Matt. xiii. 26).

(g) *Flax* has been cultivated in the east from the earliest times. The Egyptians were very proficient in the art of linen-weaving, and many mummies have been discovered, some of them thousands of years old, wrapped in beautiful linen cloth (Gen. xli. 42). It

was also cultivated in Palestine (Josh. ii. 6). "The flax was bolled," in Ex. ix. 31, means: "the flax was in flower."

CHAPTER XII

ANTIQUITIES

BURIED in the earth under heaps of ruins, undisturbed for many centuries, lay countless relics of the past. No one knew of their existence, nor had anyone considered their importance as a confirmation of Scripture.

During the last fifty years, many of these buried treasures have come to light, partly as a result of exploration and partly by accident. Many of them have a definite bearing upon Scripture History, and in every case confirm the Bible. They sometimes explain its difficulties, while sometimes they fill in the outlines of a somewhat meagre history—*they do everything but contradict it.* "The stones are crying out," and giving their unqualified testimony to the truth of Scripture and shutting the mouth of those who are trying to shake our faith in its truths.

Many splendid books have been written describing these wonderful discoveries: here, in a single chapter, we can only refer to some of them briefly; at any

rate, this chapter should show how important it is for Bible students to make themselves acquainted with the subject.

We will refer briefly to some of the discoveries in Palestine.

1. *Phœnician Inscription.*—At the S.E. wall of the city of Jerusalem, the Palestine Exploration Fund workers sank a deep shaft to see how deep they would have to dig before reaching the foundation stones. The wall at this corner is about 90 feet high ; after digging almost as deep as the wall is high, they came upon the foundation stones dating from the times of Solomon. On one of these were found the mason's marks of the builders of that wall, which, upon careful examination, proved to be Phœnician characters. But what had Phœnicians to do with the building of that wall ? We turn to 1 Kings v. 18, and read how Hiram, King of Tyre—the King of the Phœnicians—a friend and ally of David, sent to his old friend's son in Jerusalem some of his skilled masons to help him in his great work—an interesting confirmation of Scripture history.

2. *Siloam Inscription.*—The water which flows into the Siloam pool comes from a spring called the Virgin's fountain. This is connected with the pool by a long underground tunnel, some 1,700 yards long. Who made this tunnel, and why was it made ? In 2 Kings xx. 20, we are informed that among the acts of Hezekiah's reign was the making of a conduit to bring

water into the city of Jerusalem. Now the Virgin's Fountain is outside the city, and the pool of Siloam was within the city walls in ancient times. This tunnel was then the one he made. Now a few years ago a lad from our Jewish Mission School, while bathing in this tunnel, noticed what appeared to be some writing inscribed on the rock. This was examined by experts and proved to be an account of the boring of the tunnel. The inscription was in the ancient Hebrew characters, the Hebrew of Isaiah's time, who lived in the reign of Hezekiah.

3. *Stone from Herod's Temple.*—Recently a stone was found, built into a Jerusalem house, containing a Greek inscription. It was a notice forbidding Gentiles from passing through a barrier in the Court of the Gentiles. Josephus, the Jewish historian, describes this, and gives the inscription as having been put up in different languages, to warn Gentiles from passing through. This stone explains two passages, one in Acts xxi. 28, 29, where St. Paul was accused of passing two Gentiles through this barrier into the place of prayer to which Jews only were admitted, and which, it will be remembered, nearly cost the Apostle his life; and the other in Eph. ii. 14, where St. Paul calls this barrier "the middle wall of partition," teaching that the coming of Christ had broken down these barriers; Jew and Gentile are one in Christ Jesus.

4. *Ruins of Jericho.*—During the last few years, the German Exploration Society have been exploring the

mounds, where lay, undisturbed for many centuries, the ruins of ancient Jericho. All that remains of that old city has been uncovered, and one can now form an idea of the Jericho which Joshua conquered from the Canaanites. The houses were very small, while the streets were of the very narrowest. The foundations of the walls of Jericho can be traced—the wall which fell down at the blast of the trumpets. One point is very striking. The Israelites were commanded to go round the walls daily for a week, while on the last day they were to go round seven times (Josh. vi. 3, 15). The impression of those living in modern towns and cities would be the apparent impossibility of this. Fancy the Israelites having to walk round Birmingham or Manchester—or, indeed, many a smaller town—seven times in one day! The Jericho of Joshua's day was so cramped and crowded, without any wide streets or parks or gardens—indeed the houses appear more like magnified rabbit warrens —that one could easily walk round the whole city in about half an hour!

5. *Ruins of Gezer.*—Some twenty-five years ago, near a large mound which marked the ruins of an ancient city, a French explorer discovered a stone with an inscription simply containing the words, "The boundary of Gezer." This indicated the fact that the mound contained the ruins of that ancient Levitical city. Our own Palestine Exploration Fund started digging through the mound, and made many most startling discoveries. Traces were found of seven

cities, one buried below the other, from the latest city of Maccabæan time to the oldest city of long before the days of Abraham, when the inhabitants dwelt in caves. Cruel and brutal must the Amorites have been who dwelt here in early times. They perpetrated almost nameless horrors, for when they started building houses they always built the foundation on a human sacrifice. Human bones and skeletons have been found in many places—often those of a woman, in one case of a young girl, but she must have been cut in two, only the upper part of the body having been found. The discovery of these cruelties on the part of the Amorites throws light on some passages of Scripture. Already in Gen. xv. 16 we read of the "iniquity of the Amorites" (see also Lev. xviii. 27). God also commanded the Israelites, after they had conquered Canaan, to drive out or destroy the inhabitants. These heathen nations were to be punished on account of their wickedness (Deut. ix. 4, 5—see also Deut. xx. 17 and 1 Kings xxi. 26).

Among the ruins of a later Gezer, a change for the better was noticeable. Part of the city was still in the hands of heathen who practised these cruel rites, but another part was occupied by people who were free from abominations. These later arrivals were not heathen at all; and a study of Judges i. 29 leaves no doubt as to who they were. They were Israelites who failed to dispossess the heathen inhabitants; they both occupied the same city, and the discovery of the ruins of that very city confirms this.

Signs of a yet later city were discovered burnt and charred. Evidently some enemy had destroyed Gezer by fire. We turn to 1 Kings ix. 16, to find that Pharaoh had done so. Those charred remains of the city of nearly 3,000 years ago prove the accuracy of the Word of God.

6. *The Ruins of Capernaum.*—Two sites, both on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, claim to be Capernaum. But the one called Tel-Hum is most generally believed to be the true one. At any rate, our Lord's prophecy concerning the downfall of the city in which most of His mighty works were done, must have had a most literal fulfilment when it is possible now, in all good faith, to doubt the very identity of the site.

The most interesting discovery at Tel-Hum consists of the remains of the Jewish Synagogue. Built in a style peculiarly un-Jewish, it might be mistaken for a heathen temple, but for some features which prove it to have been the Synagogue of the Jews. But the very fact that it presented a heathen appearance confirms the Gospel story, where we are told (St. Luke vii. 5) that it had been built—not by the Jews, but by a Roman centurion. Examine these ruins and they confirm the Scriptures.

7. *The Moabite Stone.*—In the land of Moab, east of the Jordan, a stone was discovered containing an

inscription in the language of Moab, which was very much like the ancient Hebrew. It was a monument set up by a King of Moab, named Mesha, who records on it his victories over his enemies, whom he mentions by name. They were the Israelites and the Edomites. He also tells on his monument how his enemies the Israelites had enslaved his people, and forced them to pay tribute; then he relates how he rebelled, and ultimately freed his people and his country from the foreign yoke. Strange to say, the King of Moab, and his wars, are mentioned in the Bible. In 2 Kings i. 1, we are told that Moab rebelled against the Israelites, while in chapter iii. verse 4 we are told of the tribute Mesha was forced to pay to the Israelites, and his rebellion and battles. From this chapter it would appear that he did not succeed in freeing himself at once; that, indeed, he suffered a severe defeat—this, of course, he would not mention on his monument—nations are not in the habit of recording their defeats. The interesting confirmation of Scripture lies in the fact that—except for the omission of his defeat, his stone monument confirms the Scripture history.

These are but a few of the discoveries made in Palestine. Add to them the records of the past which have been brought to light in Egypt and Assyria bearing upon Scripture history, we have a valuable accumulation of evidence in favour of the truth of the Bible, and while it confirms our faith in its accuracy, it at the same time fills our minds with doubts as to the value of those theories and assump-

tions which are intended to shake our faith in its teaching.

* * * * *

When we bear in mind the fact that only some ruined places have been unearthed, and discoveries made which have, however, confirmed the Sacred Scriptures, what may we not expect when explorations are conducted on a larger scale? One thing is certain: we have nothing to fear from the onslaughts of destructive critics so long as every discovery only confirms the Word of God. One ounce of fact annihilates tons of theories. Thousands of pebbles may be flung against the giant rock; the pebbles fall to the ground, the rock remains. "The Word of God endureth for ever"!

We are glad to hear that since the British occupation of Palestine, the laws which obtain in Egypt, prohibiting the destruction or removal of any monuments of antiquity, have been applied to the Holy Land. When the country is more settled, no doubt Exploration Societies will once again be at work and we shall expect many sensational discoveries.

CHAPTER XIII

THE TABERNACLE

FOR forty years the Israelites lived in tents in the wilderness, just as the Bedouins do to-day. This wild roving life does not conduce to progress and change. Arts and industries can never flourish when people have no settled abode.

Now there must have been something altogether exceptional in the fact that while the Israelites came out of Egypt a nation of slaves, and wandered forty years in the wilderness, they were able to produce laws which are the wonder and the model of all civilized nations. How can this be accounted for except on our willingness to admit the truth of the constantly recurring expression, "And GOD spake unto Moses."

With perfect confidence we have been assured that the Tabernacle never existed. It should be remembered there is not the slightest shred of evidence in support of this wild theory.

In the making of the Tabernacle God was His own

Architect. The fact that so many chapters (thirteen in Exodus) are taken up with a description of its material, shape and furniture, indicates the importance which God attached to it. Then in the Epistle to the Hebrews we have an inspired explanation of the Tabernacle as pointing us to Christ's work on earth and in heaven. Christ therefore is the key-note of the Tabernacle. As it stood in the wilderness, and afterwards in the Holy Land, it gave the Israelites the foundation principles of their religion by means of picture and symbol, without which spiritual truths must have been beyond their mental reach.

The study of the Tabernacle by Christians becomes one of absorbing interest and profit, in that these pictures and symbols explain more fully God's plan of salvation through Christ our Saviour. The study of the subject is also of great importance in throwing light on the great doctrine of the Atonement, that "without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin."

What then was the Tabernacle? In the Hebrew the word "Ohel," translated "Tabernacle," is used for every ordinary tent; but structurally it differed entirely from them, excepting in one point—it was portable.

The Tabernacle consisted of a framework of shittim wood, probably the acacia which grows wild in the wilderness. This framework was composed of 48

upright boards, fifteen feet long and twenty-seven inches wide and overlaid with gold. When erected, every board had to be fixed into "sockets" of solid silver, each board resting upon two heavy silver bars. The boards therefore did not touch the ground. But while each board was self-contained, they all had to be linked together and form one solid framework on which heavy curtains and hangings could securely rest. This was done by four long bars of wood (overlaid with gold) which were run into rings attached to each board. Every board was also pierced through with a hole, thus enabling another bar of wood to run right through them. While therefore the four bars were visible, this one was invisible.

When the framework was put up it measured 45-ft. by 15-ft., and it stood 15-ft. in height. Over this were thrown four coverings, described fully in Exodus xxvi. 1-14, long and wide enough to hide completely the gilt boards from the exterior. The entrance was curtained with a very beautiful veil.

The Tabernacle was then divided into two unequal parts, the first, called the Holy Place, being 30-ft. long. This was divided from the Holiest of all by another very beautiful curtain. The general appearance from without was plain and unattractive; within, walls and all the contents, glittered with gold.

In the Holy of Holies stood the golden ark or chest with a lid on which rested the figures of two cherubim,

also of gold; this was suggestively called God's Mercy-Seat. Here was enshrined the symbol of God's abiding presence with His people. The Holy Place contained three things: the Golden Altar of Incense, the Table of Shewbread, both made of Shittim wood and overlaid with gold, and the beautiful seven-branched Candlestick, made of solid gold.

Outside the Tabernacle in the Court stood the great Altar of Burnt Offerings, and the Brazen Laver. The Court itself was 150-ft. by 75-ft., and was divided from the encampment of the Israelites by means of long curtains of fine linen fixed on 60 pillars with a beautiful curtain at the entrance called the Gate.

Such was, in brief, the Tabernacle as designed by God Himself. That He regarded it as most important may be gathered from the fact that every detail of the framework, materials, etc., is mentioned four times. First when God gave the command (Ex. xxv.-xxx.); once again as the various parts were being made (Ex. xxxvi. and xxxviii.); a third time when Moses inspected and took stock of each part (Ex. xxxix. 33-43); and lastly when it was being put up for the first time (Ex. xl.). Why this fourfold repetition? Four biographies, so to speak, of the Tabernacle, just as we have four biographies of Him who tabernacled with men. Why this repetition, except to emphasize the importance which God attached to its spiritual teaching? And in very truth, every detail sparkles with Gospel light.

One can here but hurry through the more important features of the Tabernacle and show what teaching they conveyed :—

1. *The Outer Gate*, consisting of a curtain only, so easy of access, no possibility of locking or barring it. Such is our Lord who says, "I am the door" (John x. 7).

2. *The Court* itself divided from the encampment, a picture of the safe retreat of the People of God—the Sheepfold (John x. 1).

3. *The Altar of Burnt Offerings.* "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Hebrews ix. 28).

4. *The Brazen Laver.* "Christ also loved His Church . . . that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. v. 25, 26—see also Ps. li. 7 ; Zech. xiii. 1 ; John iii. 5).

5. *The Tabernacle as a whole.* "The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us" (John i. 14).

6. *The Boards* of shittim wood—a wild tree growing in the wilderness :—"At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. ii. 12 —see also Col. i. 21, 22).

7. *The Boards joined together* with bars and forming a compact structure. "Christ the Head, from whom the whole body fitly joined together" (Eph. iv. 15, 16). Again:—"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. xii. 5).

8. *Silver Sockets* forming the foundations for all the boards. Silver is a symbol of redemption (Ex. xxx. 16). "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold.....but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet. i. 18, 19; Col. ii. 7; 1 Cor. iii. 11).

9. *The Golden Candlestick* with its perpetual light —"I am the Light of the World" (John viii. 51).

10. *The Table of Shewbread.*—"I am the Living Bread which came down from heaven" (John vi. 51).

11. *The Altar of Incense.*—A Priest entered daily into the Holy Place to burn incense. He represented the people before God. "Wherefore He is able to save to the uttermost.....seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. vii. 25—see also Rom. vii. 34).

12. *The Curtain* (*or Vail*).—Rent in twain from the top to the bottom (Matt. xxvii. 51). "Through Whom we have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. ii. 18—see also Heb. x. 19, 20).

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13. *The Holiest of all.*—No Priest could enter here, not even the High Priest, except on the solemn Day of Atonement, when he entered to sprinkle blood on the Sacred Ark. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands.....but into heaven itself" (Heb. ix. 24).

14. *The Ark and the Mercy-Seat.*—"Seeing.....we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God" (Heb. iv. 14).

15. *The temporary character of the Tabernacle and its ritual.*—"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:.....and this shall be the covenant:.....I will put my law in their inward parts" (Jer. xxxi. 31-33). And the inspired commentator exclaims: "In that He saith, A new Covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (Heb. viii. 13—see also 2 Cor. v. 17, and Eph. ii. 15).

Wonderfully suggestive, too, is the thought that each common board of a wild tree found in the wilderness, had to be transformed, by being completely covered with gold before it could be used in God's service. Does not this wood growing in the wilderness represent man in his natural state, while gold represents the holiness of God? And how incongruous it seems that the board from the wilderness had to be pre-

served by resting on a foundation of solid silver. Moreover, the silver foundations had "sockets," *holes bored* into them, so that the "tenons," or arms of the wood, could *penetrate* and be firmly fixed, not only on the silver, but *into* the silver. This is the best picture we have explanatory of Eph. ii.

These are but a few of the points of comparison between the Tabernacle and Christ. More could be given, but is there not a danger of overstepping the mark by forcing meanings into words and sentences which were never intended by God, and which can only discredit the study of this all-important subject?

CHAPTER XIV

THE RAISED MAP OF PALESTINE

PALESTINE, or the Holy Land, with the old traditional boundary "from Dan to Beersheba," is just a little larger than Wales. From north to south it is 150 miles long, and from east to west at its widest point only about 100 miles. It covers an area of 10,000 square miles.

In Solomon's time the kingdom was at its very greatest; we are told that it extended from the Euphrates in the north (1 Kings iv. 21) to Egypt in the south. Even then, however, it was not much larger than England and Wales, and in point of size was quite insignificant when compared with its neighbours Egypt and Assyria. What, then, may we ask, made it famous above all the kingdoms of the east?

1. Its Unique Physical Features.
2. Its Unique Position.
3. A Peculiar People.

1. *Physical Features.*—No spot in the whole world of the size of Palestine contains such heights and depths all crowded within so small a compass. In the north are mountains 10,000 feet high, from which the snow never altogether disappears, while along the Jordan and Dead Sea Valley there exists a depression 1,300 feet below the level of the sea. This fact accounts for the two extremes of climate, that of the most northerly point of Europe and that of the Equator. Another degree of climate, practically that of North Africa, exists in the low maritime plains of Philistia, Sharon, and Esdraelon. In the centre of the country, almost from north to south, there is a range of mountains with an average altitude of about 2,500 feet, possessing the climate of Italy and Spain. The country east of the Jordan is also chiefly mountainous, with a great plateau in the north rising about 3,000 feet above sea level.

It will thus be seen that Palestine possesses every variety of climate.

The soil in most parts is very rich, and in the hands of intelligent farmers could be made to produce almost anything. Even with the most primitive implements and methods, every kind of grain and fruit is grown.

Palestine possesses one river only, the Jordan. From its source, as the crow flies, to the Dead Sea, it is only 130 miles long. At its source it is about

3,000 feet above the sea level; by the time it has reached the Dead Sea it is about 1,300 feet below sea level. Between the waters of Merom and the Sea of Galilee, a distance of only 13 miles, it descends some 680 feet. The word Jordan means "the Descender." For purposes of navigation and irrigation it is useless.

The Dead Sea is a most remarkable sheet of water —a marvel to the geologist, a puzzle to all. It is, as already mentioned, 1,300 feet below sea level. The Jordan flows into it, other copious streams help to feed it, it has no outlet so far as man can tell; yet it remains practically at the same level. The waters of the Dead Sea are so impregnated with salt, that in spite of all the sweet waters of the Jordan emptying themselves into it, the sea remains as salt as ever. How to account for the existence of the Dead Sea is a mystery. There are many indications of volcanic agency; hot springs abound at the Sea of Galilee, and many sulphur springs in the south. The whole neighbourhood must have been convulsed through earthquakes and volcanic action, an indication of which is to be found in Gen. xix. As a country, therefore, Palestine's physical features are unique.

2. *Its position is also unique.*—The Holy Land occupies the most central position in the Eastern hemisphere, and forms the junction of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Any road leading from Asia to Africa, or from Europe to Africa at its most important point,

would have to pass through Palestine. Given a people with great powers for good or evil, they could influence the world. This unique position would also naturally make it a great centre of trade; and in palmier times history tells us how Palestine attracted many nations, and the products of many countries (see 2 Chron. ix.).

3. *The land was occupied by a peculiar people*—a branch of the same Semitic race owning the land to-day, but very different in character and influence. Originally a pastoral and agricultural people, they never filled a very prominent position in the political world. Egypt and Assyria generally overshadowed, and often conquered them. When these empires vanished and others took their place, they in turn found no difficulty in subduing them. Politically, then, the Semitic owners of Palestine were not of great moment, nor have they given to the world anything remarkable in the field of Arts or of Science. Greece and Rome have taught us much, so has Ancient Egypt; but so far as general knowledge is concerned, these Semitic tribes have taught us nothing. And yet these shepherds of the East, these tillers of the soil, have swayed the destinies of the civilised world by giving it something which has been the source, and the motive power, of everything which tends to greatness, goodness, and moral worth; they gave the world a Book which has become THE BOOK of the world; they also gave the world one Member of their race, Who has, by His

example, His life, and His death, revolutionised the world—they gave us the MAN, Jesus Christ!

Hence the interest in this little strip of land, geographically so small, yet, from the highest point of view, the very centre of the world, the Holy Land, the "land which the Lord careth for."

CHAPTER XV

THE SECOND TEMPLE

THERE were, strictly speaking, two "Second Temples." The first was built by Zerubbabel, about 500 B.C. In course of time, owing chiefly to the many wars and sieges Jerusalem had undergone, the Temple must have been in a poor state of repair when Herod was made King of the Jews. He set to work to enlarge and beautify it; and, indeed, so thoroughly was the work done, that in our Lord's day there stood a Temple on the brow of Moriah of such size and exquisite workmanship, that the disciples might well say, "Master, see these stones" (Mark xiii. 1). The work of building occupied many years, hence the expression, "Forty and six years was this Temple in building" (John ii. 20).

General Appearance ana Size.—The Temple covered nearly thirty-five acres of ground. It was built on a gigantic platform raised to the level of the summit of Mount Moriah. Great stones were used in its construction; many have been found forty feet long.

Cloisters.—The whole area was closed in by gigantic walls and four beautiful cloisters raised on graceful

columns. In the north-west and east they were 40 feet high, but the Southern Cloister known as the Royal Cloister, was 100 feet high and nearly 1,000 feet in length. Think of two York Minsters joined to one another lengthways, and you have the Royal Cloister! One of these was called "Solomon's Porch."

The Court of the Gentiles.—So called because Gentiles were admitted here. It had degenerated into a market, with booths and shops. From this Court our Lord drove out those who bought and sold (Matt. xxi.).

The Middle Wall of Partition was a low barrier of stone with golden pillars, and with openings at intervals to allow worshippers to pass through. None but Jews were admitted here. There were notices on the walls warning Gentiles from passing through. St. Paul is thinking of this when he reminds us that Christ . . . . hath broken down the middle wall of partition (Eph. ii. 14). One of these very stones with the notice in Greek was discovered recently in Jerusalem.

The Court of the Women.—This was the Inner Court, and the place of prayer, so called because women were allowed here, but were not admitted any farther. In this Court were the chests in shape of trumpets to receive the alms. Here the poor widow cast her "two mites" (Luke xxi. 2); these trumpet-shaped money boxes probably are referred to by our

Lord when He condemns the hypocritical givers who "sound a trumpet" (Matt. vi. 2).

The Court of Israel was a narrow Court, only separated by a low barrier from the Court of the Priests. Here came up the men when they brought their offerings.

The Court of the Priests.—None but Priests and Levites were admitted here. In this Court stood the great Altar of Burnt Offerings and the Brazen Laver.

The Holy and Most Holy Place.—Leading into the Holy Place stood a beautiful porch or portico, raised on four pillars, each 100 feet in height. These took the place of the two pillars put up by Solomon in his Temple, called Jachin and Boaz (1 Kings vii. 21). Round these pillars clustered a golden vine—the offerings of the Jewish nation. The vine was the emblem of the Jews. "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt" (Ps. lxxx. 8—see also Isa. v. 1; Hos. x. 1; Joel i. 7; while no mention need be made of the many references by our Lord to the Jewish national emblem in His parables and sayings).

Only Priests entered into the Holy Place to burn incense on the Golden Altar. Zacharias was performing this duty when the Angel Gabriel announced the birth of St. John the Baptist (St. Luke i. 9). This was separated from the Most Holy Place by a beautiful curtain—the "Vail of the Temple." Into the

Most Holy Place the High Priest only entered once a year, on the Day of Atonement.

The Castle. — At the north-west corner of the Temple stood the Roman Governor's Palace and Court of Justice, called the Castle of Antonia. It also contained the barracks, and many soldiers were quartered here. It was from these stairs at the castle that the Roman soldiers rushed into the Temple to rescue St. Paul, and on these stairs stood the Apostle when he addressed the Jews (Acts xxi.). There our Lord was condemned to death.

The Temple is now completely destroyed; our Lord's words having been fulfilled to the letter: "Not one stone shall be left upon another" (Matt. xxiv. 2). On its site stands the Moslem Shrine, the Dome of the Rock, and the Mosque El-Aksa.

CHAPTER XVI

JEWISH MISSIONS

THE Jew has had his day, and is played out; nothing more to expect from him. Jewish Missions are a failure.—In these two sentences may be summed up all the adverse criticism levelled against Jewish Missions; and both are not only wrong, but absurd. If the Jew "has had his day, and is played out," then why has he been allowed to remain in a most miraculous manner a separate people, scattered everywhere, yet not absorbed among other nations?

When nations are played out they become extinct. When a watch is played out it stops. The Jews show a most remarkable vitality; they are distinguished in every profession, they take a prominent part in politics, finance, literature and music. Is it not then absurd, in the face of the very conviction of our eyes, to say the Jews are "played out"?

Some, however, apply the phrase to religion only, and wish to imply that God gave the offer of salvation to the Jews first, but since they rejected it, they have

now lost all chance. But is there any passage in Scripture to prove this? How many statements about the Jews are made with the greatest assurance, but which are absolutely wrong? The Jews have been condemned without a hearing by a spurious Christianity in the dark ages of the Church; and although we have reformed many of our doctrines and Church practices, and have brought them into line with primitive and Apostolic Christianity, we still retain to a very great extent the prejudices of the Middle Ages.

To take one illustration only. Note the misleading titles which are placed at the head of each chapter of the Bible, more particularly in the Prophets. In one chapter the Jews are denounced for their sins, and threatened with severe punishments. The titles rightly attribute this chapter to the Jews. In another chapter God is promising great blessings to the same people, to the same place. The expressions, "Judah and Israel," "Zion and Jerusalem," occur in both cases. But our titles refer these blessings, not to the Jew, but to the "Church." Now can an interpretation be right which applies "Judah and Jerusalem" to the Jews in one place, and to "the Church" in another? Surely if these expressions apply to the Church when blessings are mentioned, they should apply to the Church in every case. But this would reduce the position of Scripture to an absurdity. I prefer to adopt the most obvious and natural course —every passage containing the names of "Zion,"

"Daughter of Zion," "Judah," "Jerusalem," applies to the Jews, whether the subject of the prophecy refers to blessings or curses.

When we are clear on this point, and turn to the Sacred Scriptures, we find that God says in Jer. xxx. 11, "Though I make a full end of all the nations of the earth, yet will I not make a full end of thee." St. Paul predicted a time when "all Israel should be saved," and Zechariah says, "they shall look on Him whom they have pierced and mourn." "Hath God cast away His people? God forbid," says St. Paul. And we have the distinct command of our Lord to "begin at Jerusalem" (Luke xxiv. 47). Like other passages, it has been wrested from its true meaning. If we are in doubt as to its true meaning, we have but to turn to the men who were likely to be the best judges, namely, the Apostles.

In the Acts of the Apostles we find that they always went to "the Jew first" in every city they came to, showing by this very act how they understood our Lord's command.

Our Lord would surely not have given so direct a command, nor would the Apostles have obeyed it so faithfully, had they believed that the Jews were "played out."

The annals also of Jewish Missions are clear on the point.

Jewish Missions are not very popular, and do not appeal to a very large body of Christians ; the support received therefore is small. Yet God has blessed the work beyond all expectation ; and in any comparison between Jewish Missionary enterprise and work in heathen lands, Jewish Missions curiously take the first place so far as results go. Many may be prepared to question this. The following facts I would venture to commend to our readers :—

1. There are to-day about 300 clergymen of the Church of England who are descendants of Abraham.

2. The Jews have given to the Church at least three of her Bishops.

3. Christian Jews are providing some hundreds of preachers in Nonconformist pulpits at home and abroad.

4. Some Chairs of the great Universities in England and other countries are occupied by Christian Jews, who are thus helping to train our future theologians and clergymen.

5. They have produced many distinguished authors and theologians like Edersheim, Saphir and Neander; musicians like Felix Mendelssohn, financiers like Sir Moses Salvador, lawyers like Lord Herschel.

6. They have supplied the ranks of nearly every Missionary Society with some of their most faithful and devoted workers.

7. They gave the Chinese a translation of the Old Testament in the Mandarin dialect, and for the Mongolians one who was able to translate and revise parts of God's Word. They gave to the Afghans their translation of the Bible.

8. The number of Jews converted to Christianity during the 19th century, on the authority of Professor de la Roi, must be at least 240,000.

Can any Mission give such a record? These facts must not be misunderstood. We are not attempting to decry other Missions and other Societies. These facts must be plainly stated because Jewish Missions have been decried; it is therefore necessary to draw a comparative statement, and show how unfounded the attacks are which are so thoughtlessly made against Jewish Missions.

The author hopes every reader of this little book will become a warm friend and supporter of Jewish Missions. The London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, the Society with which he had the honour to be connected, is the oldest and largest, with a staff of 200 workers, stationed in about 60 missionary centres, and doing a great work for the ingathering of Israel.

The author gratefully acknowledges his great indebtedness to this good Society's missionaries, who were the means of leading into the fold of Christ his own father and mother; the former in Egypt, the latter in Jerusalem.

Jesus Christ took not on Him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. Christ was a Jew. Do you believe this? Then we claim your love and sympathy on behalf of our Lord's own brethren.

"*Go, tell My brethren.*"

CHAPTER XVII

BRITISH RULE IN PALESTINE

NO book on Palestine can be complete without some reference to the great events which have convulsed Europe and revolutionized Palestine, and are destined in time to affect the future of the whole world.

Briefly they are these :—

1. Four hundred years ago Palestine passed into the hands of the Turk, and her blighting influence turned the fairest portions of God's earth into a wilderness. The people were oppressed and robbed, no improvements were tolerated—indeed, our Lord's words are literally fulfilled, that "the land shall be downtrodden of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." And Christians asked themselves again and again, When will those times be fulfilled, and what means will God use to bring about His purposes?

2. About a hundred years ago Turkey became "the Sick Man"; but he was "doctored" by the five Powers of Europe, who felt that his death would

create a great European war, and he had to be kept alive no matter at what cost. So he was allowed to massacre Armenians and maladminister his land.

3. About forty years ago Jews began to pour into the country from Russia and Poland. They bought land and commenced farming, but in troublous times. Laws were passed prohibiting Jews from settling in Palestine, and they were obliged to smuggle themselves into the country, while the officials had to be kept quiet with incessant "backsheesh."

4. About twenty years ago a fresh factor forced itself upon the scene in the person of the Kaiser, who visited Constantinople, and made a public entry into Jerusalem as the ally of the Sultan and the friend of Islam. The concession of the Bagdad Railway to Germany was the result. As German influence increased, to the same extent British influence waned, and the world wondered what it would lead to. Would England cease to be the Power in the East, and would Teuton influence supersede her? Germany seemed to be carrying all before her. Bible students believed that England would control Palestine, though, from the strange disposition of the political forces, nothing seemed more unlikely, for were we not bound by solemn treaties to protect Turkey against all comers?

5. Then the war broke out, and students of the Near East wondered on whose side Turkey would

range herself. There is no doubt that the Allies made a desperate bid for Turkey's neutrality, or for her to cast in her lot with them, and, had she done so, her integrity as an independent state would have been assured her. But the great hour had struck, "the times of the Gentiles had been fulfilled," and, in spite of all our efforts, Turkey threw in her lot with the Central Powers.

The effect of this action upon the Jews of the whole world was electrical; they knew that Turkey as good as committed suicide. They also felt instinctively that the death of Turkey would be the resurrection of the Jewish people. And still men asked, How can this thing be? And the Hand of God moved, and what seemed impossible one day became an accomplished fact the next. England did not break her treaties with Turkey, but Turkey broke her treaties with England, and in so doing she turned against her only supporter. England was now forced to act in defence of Egypt and the Suez Canal, and when, on the 9th of August, 1917, General Allenby made his state entry on foot into the city of Jerusalem, the clock struck the hour for the deliverance of the city from oppression and wrong, and Turkey had to quit.

6. England in occupation of Palestine spells blessing to the land. Four months after the taking of Jerusalem, the city was supplied with water from some neighbouring springs. The streets are cleaner, many

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of the smells have vanished. Courts of law have been set up, which will for ever end the evil days of injustice and tyranny. Religious toleration is assured; health, sanitation and education are being attended to; vast sums of money are being expended by the conquerors upon the vanquished, the starving are fed, the naked are clothed; the *fellah*, who for centuries believed from bitter experience that a government existed for the sole purpose of robbing and oppressing him, now finds a government ready to help him with seed and cattle, implements and protection. Roads are being made, railways are being improved and extended, and the land, languishing for centuries, is once again beginning to smile.

7. Nor is this all. England had committed herself to a resettlement of the Jews in the land of their fathers. And she is as good as her word. All the Jewish colonies, which during the terrible years of war had been ruined, are being rebuilt under the able management of the Zionist leaders; the colonists are returning to their homesteads—already the fifty colonies present busy hives of industry—and this year (1919) will see vast tracts of land covered with waving corn, hills and valleys will once again laugh and sing as of old, and, as soon as the doors are opened to admit them in any numbers, Jews are ready to return from all parts of the world.

8. But the "building up of Zion," and the return of the Jews, betokens the nearness of our Lord's

return and the conversion of the whole nation to Christ. Are we nearing the goal, the attainment of which brought the London Jews' Society into existence over 110 years ago? Is the seed sown in Jewish hearts during this long period about to yield its glorious fruit? Will they, who once said, "Away with him, crucify him," be soon saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David"? The whole trend of events appears to indicate the near approach of that day. And, if so, shall not all lovers of Zion redouble their efforts ere the sun of opportunity sets for ever? "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the Kingdom for such a time as this?"

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